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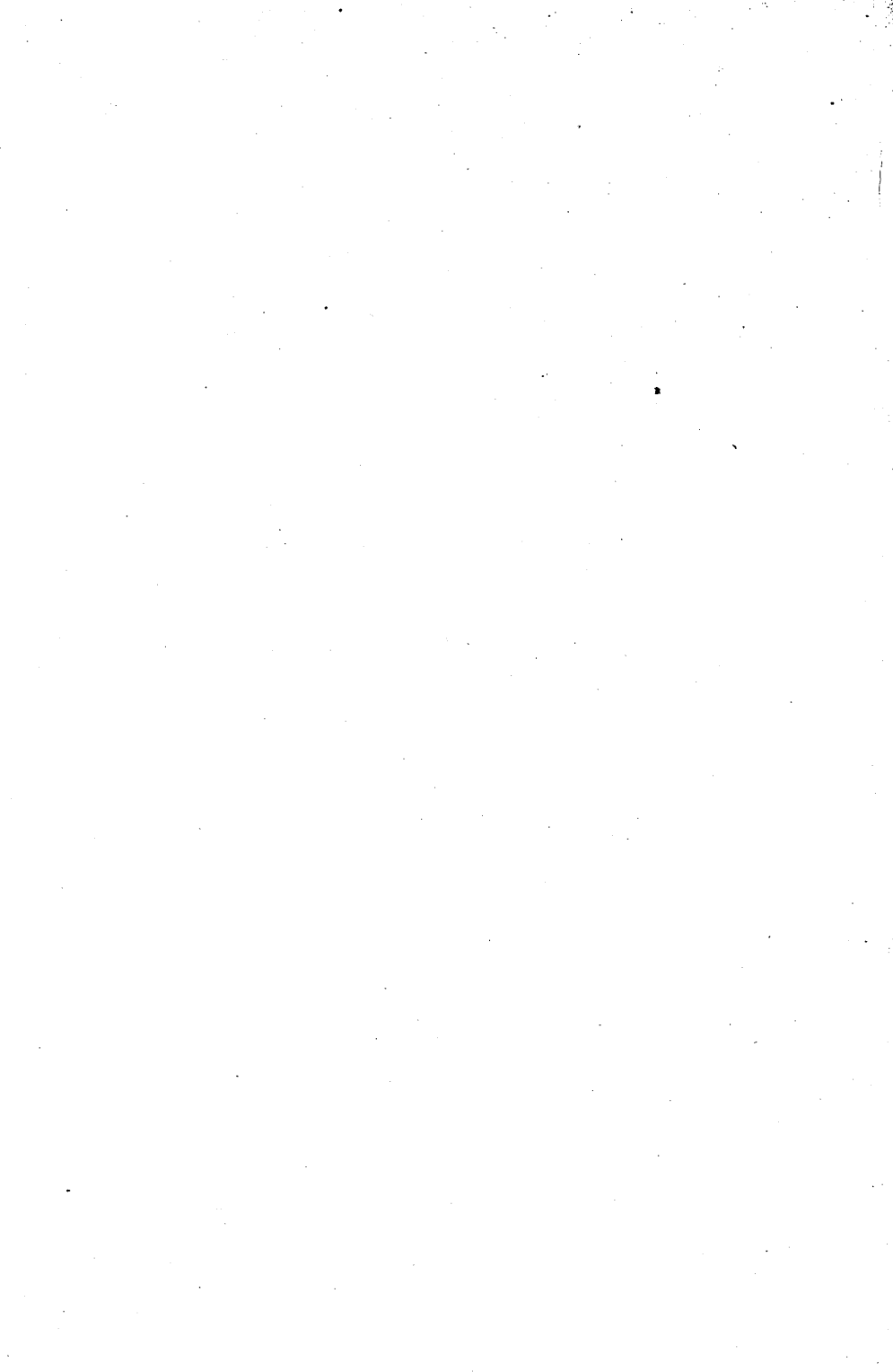
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THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE



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THE
KEY OF KNOWLEDGE

*Sermons preached in Abbey to
Westminster Boys*

BY

WILLIAM G. RUTHERFORD

HEADMASTER OF WESTMINSTER

London

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SERMON I

THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.—LUKE xi 52.

THERE are minds which love to play with the question, What would take place if Jesus Christ were to appear again now, not as he shall appear in the day of the Lord in majesty and with power, but as he once appeared among men, bruised and wounded, stricken and afflicted in his fellows' cause? As their fancy runs up and down, to and fro, upon the preposterous theme, such persons seem ever to be surprised by their own originality in discovering anew the old certainty that in the world, wherein the leaven of the Word has been at work for the better part of two millenia, and even in the visible church herself, although possessed for all but the same space of sacramental truth, and possessed

also by the Spirit of Christ—the key of knowledge nevertheless is not in every man's hand, but that multitudes still fumble at the lock with the wrong key. The Word himself, the Founder and the Keeper of the Church, when he taught as Jesus the Son of man, was not silent respecting the lasting obstructions to the progress of his gospel. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"; and that, although he can say again, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; "I am the door." So it happens that the bulk of every generation, even till the last, will either bury the key themselves, or have it hidden from them by their professed and accepted instructors; and that as a consequence, not to be evaded, every generation, even till the last, would again reject Jesus if God should again assume man's image. There had been anointed messengers of Christ before himself. The Jewish church ought to have been the church of Christ waiting for Christ's appearing; nevertheless, when the promise of these

anointed messengers was fulfilled, that church welcomed not Jesus, but denied her Messiah. Who will aver that the like could not happen again, even when in room of a promise the church has now the reality, the presence of Christ assured by the sacraments?

I should be willing, perhaps always, to admit the moral truth of what Jesus might say, the leaven of the Word having wrought thus far in my reason as to compel the avowal, "Never man spake as this man"; but there are times, I know, hours, and days, and whole weeks, when I should feel irritation, or rancour, or resentment, as often as Jesus brushed aside my self-complacency, and revealed to me the Pharisaic conventions and prejudices accumulated in my heart, its lawyer-like reliance upon rites and ceremonies, its repose in the intellectual grasp of dogmas, its confidence in the knowledge that is ignorance, in as much as it is not knowledge of God, and consequently, is not knowledge of self.

I may well ask myself, if with all my advantages, with the life of the Son of man

to serve as exemplar, with the cleansing baptism of fire whereby I should partake in his sufferings and rise with him from death, with the other sacrament by which I can keep and knit the spiritual union thus begun—I may well ask if I am better than the lawyers. They were satisfied that they had knowledge, and their countrymen were not concerned to doubt them. Teachers and taught were both content with the law—a Pharisee become Christian affirms it,—and prided themselves in God, and understood his will, and knew that they, and they alone, possessed the truth. If I, to whom a larger measure of truth is accessible, am never tempted by self-satisfaction of the same order as was theirs, if I never think that the truth is so securely mine that in its defence I must defy the authority of the church herself; if I never make sure that I understand God's will more intimately than other men; if my cry is never any other than "Christ be merciful to me a sinner"; then perhaps I may not be of those to whom Jesus says "Ye are of your father the devil,

and the lusts of your father ye will do": "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves": "Ye neither know me nor my Father": "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye enter not in yourselves, and them that are entering in ye hinder."

To the door of the kingdom of heaven there is a key which Jesus Christ names Knowledge. This key men may themselves refuse to take, and they may even hide it away so that others cannot get it. What is this key which men may hide, this knowledge which they may despise?

Knowledge has so many denotations that if allowed to jostle one another they produce disorder and confusion. There are several keys so named, and each fits a different lock and opens a different door.

By knowledge is sometimes meant nothing more than the product of the commonest processes of memory, such as are within the capacity of quite embryonic intelligence.

Everybody other than a natural can acquire this order of knowledge, and make himself master of this key. He can be taught to read and to write better or worse; and with the key thus put into his hand he may unlock two doors, at his choice, the one opening upon the way of sober secular enjoyment and of secular profit for himself and his fellows; the other, upon the wide descending road of selfishness and the misuse of life. Everything depends upon the manner in which he uses the petty vulgar knowledge, which the community, wisely or ignorantly, now compels him to acquire. In itself this knowledge has no value. It is moreover just as likely to be misused as used. A man may corrupt his own nature with it, may undermine his will, may sap his own and his neighbour's health, just as readily as he may learn thereby to reinforce his sense of duty, to multiply his worth as a man, to enhance his value as a member of the state. Whatever his social position, the demon steam manipulating the printing-press at the bidding of lust of gain

provides him with unexhausted resources, on the one hand for impoverishing his brain, corrupting his volitions, sterilising his spiritual and moral nature; on the other, for self-instruction, self-education, the chase of truth and light.

Inadvertently I have gone here almost further than I meant, nearly confounding, not two orders of knowledge, but the same knowledge with itself carried to a higher plane. For this knowledge as it travels forward, or, in the jargon of the day, as it results from secondary in lieu of primary education, assumes manifold forms. The memory may be trained to many degrees of tenacity and vigour. Above all, she may be put into her proper place as the handmaid of reason and will. A man's mind may amass an astounding treasure in knowledge of facts and opinions and theories, moving freely among them, competent perhaps even to express them in several languages. It may make itself familiar with the elements of thought or the elements of things, and may be able to mimic even nature

herself in putting them together. It may guide the hand to a startling dexterity in workmanship, in painting, in sculpture, in architecture. There is scarcely a limit to the powers of memory, if she be directed by reason and compelled by will to labour.

Like the same knowledge in its lower degree, this also is a key unlocking doors. It opens to its possessor high forms of enjoyment and usefulness; and if he so desire, he may unlock therewith the treasure-house of the world, to take out therefrom success and riches and station. Nevertheless, this is not the knowledge which Jesus Christ calls the key.

Before all the world had been shown how to read and to write, many a man who could do neither, yet possessed a knowledge which is certainly not more common now than it was then. I call to mind patient craftsmen, plowmen, shepherds, and servants: quite illiterate they would now be called: whose aim and pride was to do the day's work skillfully and faithfully, who thought rather of

their work than of their wage, forgetting self in duty, recognising the dignity of toil, ashamed to scamp what they undertook to do, self-dissatisfied if what they gave was by a nail's-breadth short of their best. Such knowledge is an attitude to life, an affair of conduct, a product of character. It issues sometimes from a long tradition of life spent for generations under natural conditions. It approaches the knowledge of the fowls of the air or of the lilies of the field, which live and thrive just as God has willed. 'Tis a light which may be dimmed or quenched in humble natures by the crude glare of the self-assertive knowledge communicated by the will of parliaments.

On the higher plane too, if indeed it be not wrong to distinguish by such a name degrees in this order of knowledge—in the case, I mean, of the artist, the explorer of secrets in nature, in morals, or in thought, the theologian, the lawyer, the scholar—is there not a knowledge which receives justly the name of key? An attitude to work, a temper

attuned to the Creator's mind? One example must serve. An artist, if he be a master in his craft, adds to the control of the mechanical resources of his art a knowledge of a wholly different order. He has not the key of knowledge, nor shall he receive it, until he can efface self; that is, the love of fame, the love of money, everything accidental and unreal, and can so sweep and garnish his spirit that the ideal and the divine may enter in and dwell there. What makes this house great with a greatness that takes and holds possession? Its stones are common stones dug from quarries which have furnished stones as good, but never before or since for such an edifice. Wherein lies the difference between one building and another? The minds from which this house sprang and grew had gathered their cunning painfully in the common way of men, but in no common way they had learned also to extinguish self, till they were able to catch dimly some little part of the creation's secret. If there be none who now builds so masterfully, it is because none has discovered

in the same degree the creative force of self-extinction, of purity of motive, of obedience to truth, of at-one-ment with God in things unspiritual, the key of knowledge which unlocks the mysteries of nature.

I have called this knowledge divine, and so it is ; a key to nature and truth, and so it is. Nevertheless it is not the key to the kingdom of heaven ; it is not the knowledge which Christ means. It is analogous thereto, no doubt, but it is not the same. The one key and the other alike open mysteries, but the mysteries are different in kind. Before him who carries the one key the door of nature turns and reveals some at least of the secret counsels of God ; but ere long it shuts again, when the eye is obscured and the natural force perishes. He shall not read all the counsel of God, unless he has the other key also, the key of life.

The key of life, like the key of nature, is a self-extinction, a self-denial ; but whereas the one is an at-one-ment with God in things natural and transient, the other is an at-one-

ment with God in things spiritual and permanent. He who has the key of the spiritual world has but to wait for longer or for shorter, and the other key shall be his as well.

When I have understood this, I should understand why Jesus never commended or taught the self-denial, the self-discontent, that is confined to things unspiritual, and why the one ideal which he ever held up to his fellow-men was the self-denial, the self-discontentment, which is the sole source of spiritual knowledge. I should discern further why among the aids to discipleship promised by Jesus and conferred by the risen and ascended Christ there are none which avail for other than spiritual progress. Nor Word, nor Sacraments, nor Holy Spirit can abet you or me to explore aught but spiritual mysteries. The only key of knowledge which Christ offers to men is that which unlocks himself.

Therefore, though the Jews at the time of our Lord had long been sterile alike intellectually and morally ; though they begot

no literature, no art, no science, no philosophy, it was not on that account that Jesus pronounced this woe upon the leaders of the nation. Rather it was because they had buried the key of spiritual illumination; because the Light of light could not shine through them undistorted or shine at all; because the God whom they worshipped was made by themselves in man's image; because the tradition of the elders over-rode the law of God; because they set store by the letter and ignored the spirit; because the Messiah of the prophets was wrested into a temporal deliverer; because they had eyes but saw not, ears but heard not; because they had no room in their souls for anything but themselves; because they had no call to hear Moses and the prophets, and would not give ear, even if one rose from the dead; because they had attained and were content.

This temper, Jesus implies, is the hiding away of the key of knowledge. Self-contentment is atheism, and irreligion, and spiritual death. Its contrary in the spiritual field, the

key of knowledge, must therefore be restless dissatisfaction with oneself, a continuous movement towards something never attained, yet plainly described and enunciated by the Word himself, and recognisable by all the self-dissatisfied as indeed the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON II

THE INSCRUTABILITY OF CHARACTER

The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.—PROVERBS xiv 10.

THE friends a man loves best and trusts most may never have lived except in art or in literature. Compared with such friends he may often think that the live men and women whom he sees and hears, with whom he speaks, are unsubstantial. Sometimes if he visit spots where are said to have passed their days some of these friends whose bodily shape none ever saw, the solid ground itself, the visible fields and woods, the homesteads and the dwellers in them, appear to be less present and actual than the ideal persons who for him at least haunt the scene.

The reason for this odd contradiction and flat defiance of the senses is that he finds the ideal and counterfeit persons more easy to

comprehend than men and women whose souls are hid by flesh and blood. He can dress them in any features and frame he likes and yet leave their minds and hearts bare. He need not be angry or vexed with them, for they never cross his projects; they never smile at his infirmities of will or of temper, or offend his self-love. His intercourse with them is tranquil and happy, undisturbed by those misunderstandings and perversions whereby men are apt to misread each other as faces are distorted in a faulty glass.

Ideal persons may be judged equitably and weighed impartially, a thing impossible when the judge and the judged are living men. My most familiar friend cannot make sure of all my motives and impulses. He and I look at many things from very different points. What I think one day I may well deny the next, and the inconsistency, inevitable to me, may to him be wholly unintelligible. No two men can be at one in sentiment or in experience or in judgment. Self-will and self-interest, unsuspected even

by myself, may for a time extinguish my candour, and may cause me to misinterpret another's conduct. The devil is subtle enough to dupe the closest of friends and to tear them asunder.

When two hearts come near beating, as the saying is, in unison, the near is at best uncommonly far off, and the unison is a misnomer. When I say of my bosom friend "I have known him long," or "We know each other intimately," I exaggerate, using a common phrase which has acquired a purely conventional meaning. I know next to nothing of him, though I may guess and infer a great deal. In a blind, groping fashion I value him for what I think his character is; but he is in truth a closed book. I neither have nor can have any precise, veracious knowledge of his motives, nor can I explore the springs of his conduct. My beliefs concerning him are nothing better than a generalisation based upon such of his actions as may be known to me. There is a greater or a less balance this way or that, but nothing more.

In the field neither of feeling nor of thought do even the best of friends ever meet. Every man knows that his own heart is a sanctuary which others cannot enter, a holy ground which others may not tread even with naked feet. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

When a man's heart is glad and of good comfort, can any measure its emotion but the man himself? He would be alone, if he could; and if he must go in and out, his joy is too sacred to be divulged to his acquaintance, or even to his friends. It is rather when there is fighting within and alarms without that his face, with an hypocrisy that the angels themselves forgive, puts on the mask of gladness and contentment, that God alone may know the heart's turmoil and terror. Men are indeed a mystery and a problem to one another.

If the young think otherwise, imagining that they can bare their whole soul to a friend, and can themselves understand another's mo-

tives and impulses, despairs and aspirations, it is from lack of knowledge and experience. They only dream that the gulf is bridged, and the despair of their awakening is by the dream made more bitter and dangerous.

I suppose it is to all something of a shock to discover how little men can know of one another ; to all a critical time when impulse at last gives way to reason, and the illusions of youth are dissipated. The old sanctions of conduct are undermined. The foundation of character itself may shake, and there is some risk of collapse, at all events in the more tender and feminine, the more impulsive and dependent natures. The shock, whenever it makes itself felt, produces one of two results. It may enrich the character or it may impoverish it. When a man is compelled to realise that it is a condition of his intercourse with others that he cannot himself read with certainty another's mind, and that no other can read his, then, in as much as none is exempt from the operation of this law, it is impossible for any student of character to

make quite sure how that man will be affected in his attitude towards life by so portentous a discovery. Nevertheless, although it is impossible to make sure of the issue, it is possible at least in some measure to help in determining it. If it is true that none can explore another's heart, it is true also that the character of one man may derive help and force from the character of another. Otherwise, education might as well come to a stop. It would be foolish to attempt it. If education meant no more than the getting of so much information into another's head, it would be a poor business, a mechanic occupation. If the young must be told that character is of no consequence, that every man should travel life's road alone, self-centred and self-sufficient, recognising no claims in others, or duties to his fellows, concerned for nothing but his own profit, devoid of faith and empty of sympathy, then the word 'education' may as well become obsolete. All hope for the progressive enlargement of the ideas which the word embodies is delusive. It can solve no social

questions, soften no asperities in the common life of men, nor can it have any part in making the wilderness blossom like the rose.

Battered, however, and ill-used though the word itself may be—a thing quite natural and indeed unavoidable when men write much, speak much, read much, without thought or reflection—the richer ideas expressed by it are nevertheless in no danger. Talk is no match for conviction and knowledge. The remnant must win in the long run, nor need they fear discomfiture when they contend that education is just so far successful as it fortifies and creates character ; as it braces the will to meet courageously and hardily the disillusion of manhood ; as it prepares and tempers the spirit against the critical time when things that have seemed transparent as day become obscure as night, when despair grapples with hope, and doubt essays to dethrone faith. It is the first concern of education so to invigorate character that the issue of the inevitable conflict be less uncertain ; so to school the will that it may at least be capable of

victory. There is no need rudely to destroy illusions—time will destroy them only too soon and too effectually—but, if man can indeed aid man, it is the plain duty of such as undertake the charge of educating others to make sure as far as they can that when the illusions of youth burst like a bubble a young man's spirit may gain, not lose, thereby.

The mind may be prepared in many ways to be content with the undiscovered and undiscoverable secret of man's heart, the untold mystery of human intercourse. Like everything else obscure and unknowable the thing itself perpetually attracts. If men have never solved this riddle, it is not that they have not tried. If the study of man by man is ineffectual, it is neither dull nor unprofitable. From it, as from a vigorous root, grow the principal interests of the mind. Literature is begotten of it. It is the origin of tragedy, the motive of history, the heart of philosophy, and art in every form is nothing but an endeavour to divulge the eternal secret.

I have been brought to speak of the difficulty which men experience in understanding one another, because the thought can never be long absent from the mind of those who have to deal with the young, and is never so urgent as when year after year the duty comes round, as it has come now, of trying to give some sort of help to such as claim full citizenship in the kingdom of God. The duty would be ill done if it were assumed only for the time. It ought to lie at the heart from the hour that a boy enters the school until the day when he shares for the last time in his school life in the daily prayers under this roof. But the weeks before his confirmation bring the duty home to his masters with peculiar insistence. If every influence under which he has come in this place has not been as wholesome and as fortifying to his character as it could be made, the blame in great measure rests with those who have undertaken to train him. If anything in their lives have misled him, if they have failed to leave on his character the

impress of good, can their hopes for him be high? If on the other hand they have done what they could, though conscious of desperate shortcomings, they can nevertheless give hopefully the keeping of his heart to God. You and I, who are the fathers, the masters, or the guardians of these boys, may have no certainty concerning the spirit in which they now act—God in his wisdom has drawn a veil between their hearts and ours—but hope and faith and prayer are not denied us.

If the avenues from heart to heart were wide and open thoroughfares, men might, I conceive, be either too readily depressed or too soon encouraged by the transient moods of their neighbours. There would in any case be less nutriment for faith. The conditions of life in the kingdom of God would be greatly altered, but would men be thereby bettered? I much doubt if anybody would have his attitude to things spiritual and permanent, or to things temporal and transitory, at all improved if unbelievers and busybodies might explore at their pleasure the byways

of his thoughts. The scrutiny of men's motives is better left to the infinite justice, the infinite knowledge, the infinite mercy of God. Faith and hope, humility and brotherly love, penitence, goodness itself, inevitably perish, when they are appraised by finite intelligence. The inherent inscrutability of human character is the stronghold of the kingdom of heaven upon earth : " Do thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Now if it be acknowledged, and acknowledged it must be, that it is a law of God that none shall penetrate the secret of any soul except his own, the conviction ought to affect considerably a man's attitude to his fellows and his attitude towards himself. Seeing every day his purposes misconceived and his motives misjudged, he must think it likely that he himself is apt to misunderstand others. He may therefore without any self-disparage-

ment learn to say, "Have I any right to judge another, when it is perhaps with him as it has often been with me? No one had the means of knowing all the circumstances which produced my action in this matter or in that, and it may be that the man acts now in the only way in which under the conditions known to him he can keep his self-respect. Neither can he disclose all his motives, nor can I interpret them. His character, like that of everybody else, must remain a mystery."

Moreover, human nature being a medley in which good and evil blend confusedly, a hard judgment is for the most part as likely to be wrong as right. Even when a whole life seems to have been spent in manifold wrong-doing, it would still be preposterous to aver that every single action in it is bad; and if there be at any time the merest chance that the man's motive is good, then his act ought to be construed in his favour in default of evidence to the contrary.

What applies to judgments upon the conduct of others applies also to censure of their

beliefs and sentiments. It cannot be often justifiable to speak of these as prejudiced and perverse. In the first place there is no means of getting at the exact truth. If my own creed and my own rule of conduct have never an absolutely clear outline, my impressions in regard to what others believe cannot be very definite or certain. I am aware that in my own mind there is only a greater or a less preponderance of belief or opinion in one direction or in another. Even my intimates might find it hard to say to which side the scale turns. No instinctive sagacity can enable a man to read my mind and soul unerringly. What right have I, therefore, to usurp the office of the Son of man, Jesus Christ, the appointed judge of conduct and of creed?

The inclination to put the worst construction upon the actions of others closes the few approaches there are to their souls and hearts; whereas genial appreciation of all that may conceivably be good does augment the possibility of nearer intercourse with them. It

does more ; it augments the moral force and spiritual strength of him who practises it. Faith in others must be kept at all costs ; for without faith in man there cannot be faith in God. It is this which makes the time so critical at which the illusions of youth take flight. If in room of faith in God the young man puts belief in himself, and in room of faith in others assumes either the sneer of a cynic or the considerate tone of a man of the world, he has discarded not faith only, but humility and charity too.

So much for the influence of this thought upon the attitude of men to their fellows. I must say a word or two, before I have done, upon the way in which it may affect their estimate of themselves. Men are miserable judges no doubt of what they can achieve ; nevertheless, if they will only be honest, they ought to make the best judges of their own capacity to achieve. No one but they can tell if in any project they have sought God's strength to increase their own. No one but they can measure their tenacity of will, their

self-denial, their moral and intellectual and spiritual force. Who does not recollect times when he could not convince others that he was right, although he was himself quite sure that he must take his own way? It is a foolish person who does not seek counsel, but it is a weak person who always takes it. Manhood is begotten in the moments of life at which thou standest alone, ready to put all to the touch, not in wilfulness or arrogance, but humbly because thou must.

SERMON III

PURPOSEFULNESS

Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.—JEREMIAH ii 36.

IT rested with her neighbours on the Nile and on the Euphrates whether Palestine had peace or no. The road from Mesopotamia to Egypt, from Egypt to Mesopotamia, lay through Palestine. Palestine was more than once the battlefield of the two powers; and it might be thought that her only security lay in allying herself with the one or with the other. Nevertheless Jeremiah rebukes, as Isaiah had rebuked, the policy of this alliance as contradictory to the lessons of Jewish history, as unwise in the light of experience, as disloyal to the God of Israel.

But I do not wish to dwell upon this direct and primary meaning. It is the

secondary or implied meaning of which I would speak. For this censure is as applicable to the tendencies and habits of men now as it was to the political opinions and national bias of the contemporaries of Isaiah and of Jeremiah ; nor will the text be strained at all in the assertion that it condemns much that is characteristic in English life at this time. Men are worldly-wise without profit. Always eager to be on the winning side, they often change sides. They are restless and inconsequent in conduct. They easily tire even of the scene in which their daily round of life goes on. They do not believe that there can be any strength in sitting still.

It is not easy to compare one age with another, the prevailing temper of men in one generation with that of their fellows in another ; but perhaps it is not unjust to say of the present time that it is one of the most restless and most unstable ages in history, more rife than most with perverse discontent, with vagueness of purpose and waywardness in aims, with timorousness in action and dis-

trust of the future. The way in which men constantly speak is tantamount to an admission of this charge. They will have it that modern life is so complex and intricate that those may be forgiven who make nothing of it; that when there are so many things to choose from, it is excusable to choose ill, or to choose again and again; that instability, if not a virtue, is at least not a sin.

Modern life may be more complex than life ever was before; the contention is disputable, but let it pass. If it be more complex, that is no reason why man's character should be so complex as to be unstable; nay, reason all the more for singleness of purpose, and simplicity of plan, for taking a line and sticking to it. If steadfast purpose there be, then life will be all the more interesting for its complexity and variety. There will be all the more to keep the mind alert and active. There will be plenty to fight for, plenty to pray for. What is the use of spirit and courage and character, if they cannot make the complex simple, unravel the intri-

cate, and bring light into that which is obscure? The first recorded work of the Spirit was to bring order out of chaos; and its work is still the same. The Spirit is God's principal gift to man. Everything great is simple; for everything great is the Spirit's creation.

"Why gaddest thou about to change thy way?" The politician perhaps answers: "It is difficult not to change it when conviction draws me one way and duty to my constituents and to my party draws me another." It is difficult unless for him who believes in truth and sincerity. Perhaps the philanthropist will answer: "A man cannot shut his eyes to the miseries of the many, and spend all his compassion, and thought, and money only upon what is practicable." It is difficult; but on the one side stand reason and common sense; on the other, the sentimentality of a self-indulgent man, and a busybody's love of meddling. The ecclesiastic too will have his answer in the necessity for organisation, as it is called; for guilds, and meetings, and frequent

services. Nevertheless the choice he has to make is merely the old choice between much-serving and the better part. The scholar, the man of science, and the artist, are all distracted in much the same way, and all aver that single-hearted devotion to learning, or science, or art, is all the better for tempering with luxury, and society, and change of scene, and other things that cost money and take up time.

So all their lives many veer and change, sometimes putting their hopes in Egypt, sometimes in Assyria, and only now and then, if ever at all, in the God of Israel. There is no reason for surprise if they find life complex and embarrassing. They drift and hesitate because they postpone their better nature and higher aspirations to their meaner instincts and desires. They will not drive through life great highroads of purpose and resolution, stretching away ahead, clearly marked and not to be mistaken.

But how is the right direction first to be discovered? I have no doubt that different

men find it out in different ways, and that most must be content if they can give some sort of direction to their lives from the first. It does not so much matter which line is taken, so long as some definite aim or design, good in itself, is persistently and hardily pursued. A young man must do what his parents wish, unless he can see his way clear to support himself even in taking the first steps in the career which he prefers. Many other considerations than the necessity of keeping body and soul together may debar him from doing precisely what he knows himself best fitted for. It would be as foolish not to let such things guide him more or less, as it would be foolish for him to cry out like a child if denied that which he has set his heart upon. For is it after all so important that a man should be at liberty to choose the life for which he believes himself best fitted? The first and principal thing is that he should determine to do well the work which offers itself. If choose he may, all the better; but in order to get a choice he may

as well not "fly in the face of providence," as the saying is. Perhaps the compulsion against which he is inclined to rebel is God's way of keeping him right, and a token that he may do more valuable work in the field which he would never have visited if left to himself.

But whatever their circumstances, most men have more ways than one open to them; and between these they must decide with vigour and determination, unless they are willing to be asked, "Why gad ye about to change your way?" The decision they have to make for themselves. Nobody else can help them to much purpose. None but they can fathom the deep wells of their life, their character's strength and resources. This no doubt is the reason why it has often been in solitude that men have learnt the significance of life, and formed great resolves, the Son of man himself, Moses, Elijah, Paul. They then remove themselves from the unrealities and hypocrisies of the world, and may apprehend life's source and life's progress towards con-

summation or extinction, its issue from God himself, its besieging by Apollyon, its reunion with God through Christ, or destruction from God together with its adversary. The Way then declares himself, and the gadding about therefrom is known to be sin. "Abide in me," he saith, "and whithersoever thy course on earth carries thee, it is well."

The preacher has no right to judge any save himself; nevertheless it grieves him sometimes to think that the fault must in some measure be his own, if perchance any to whom he has often preached appear to gad about to change their way, going to college, for example, for no better reason than that they care not to decide what else to do, and again, it may be, four years later confessing to the like uncertainty, and drifting into some unloved occupation for a morsel of bread.

It is urged that the professions, being over-crowded, proffer no prospects. The excuse has been recorded in other ages and in other generations. The reason is very

different. It is that many enter the professions before they have sat down and counted the cost. Few succeed in any profession who must have three or four months' holiday in the year, and cannot do without amusement and social luxuries. There is no consecration of work for those who conceive of it as a task or a fatigue which must be recovered from. First enterprise, then resolution, then self-denial, then contentment, or, if it comes, success. It is a stern sequence, but nevertheless, a thing that makes a man's blood tingle like the clash of steel.

On this day filled full to some here with memories derived from many centuries, and enriched by the ardent hopes of many generations, I shall be forgiven for having thought rather of the adolescent than of grown men. It is the adolescent whom I would remind that there is no permanence, no continuity, no coherency in a life that has not been thought out and deliberately pursued in good report and ill with strength, and endurance, and self-respect, and faith.

Change there will be, and must be, and should be not only in particulars of conduct, but also in attitude; yet no gadding about from the Way. If a man grows, he may at threescore believe the same things as he believed when he stood on the threshold of manhood, but he must believe them in a wholly different way. The things themselves have not changed; but if they were at the first worth believing, they must have greatly changed the man who has believed them. He who lets faith and truth enter his heart, takes also with them life and growth. He is without faith and truth altogether who drifts through life disquieted and discontented, demanding money and position as things in themselves good, yet unwilling to pay for himself the price even of these paltry prizes, hoping to find others either in Egypt or in Assyria prepared to pay it for him.

SERMON IV

SINCERITY

Speaking the truth in love.—EPHESIANS iv 15.

I DARE say that if the Scribes and Pharisees had ever thought fit to bring to Jesus a man taken in insincerity, as they brought the woman taken in adultery, and Christ had said "He that is without sin among you shall first accuse him": all must have crept out convicted of conscience. All men are insincere. In this matter the best differ from the worst in very little else than the more frequent conviction of conscience.

It is not easy to speak the truth ; it is less easy still to speak the truth in love, that is, to be sincere. For, as I understand them, sincerity and the speaking of the truth in love are almost equivalents. Some men speak the truth and are rude. Others speak the truth and are blunt. Others speak the truth

and are frank. The sincere speak the truth not with rudeness, not with bluntness, not in frankness, but in love. There is no sincerity except that which springs at once from a love of truth and from brotherly love. Sincerity does not exist apart from charity. Love of truth untempered by love for man is a harsh mistress, apt to scold and quarrel, effecting less for all her scolding than sincerity effects by a smile. Before men can be sincere they must love their fellows from a sense of fellowship with them in Christ Jesus. Charity saves and sweetens the love of truth, nor lets it brew sour products. To change the figure, charity disarms the enemies of truth. Men do not resent sincerity, even when they think him who practises it to be mistaken. Sincerity redeems the worst absurdities and ignorances. A preacher, for example, may appear to his hearers both stupid and ignorant; nevertheless they may be not only impressed but advantaged by his sincerity. A critical contempt for a prophet's or an apostle's reasoning is quite compatible with a yearning

envy for his spiritual sincerity and spiritual sagacity. The most powerful, the most fruitful influences in the world are those like sincerity and charity, which derive from the indwelling Word, who interprets God to man. God is truth; God is love; and this infinite truth, infinite love, can in part be apprehended by the believer in Jesus Christ.

Each generation must re-discover fundamental truth for itself. Men are not now, nor are they ever, better than their fathers. They but think the same things out in another way. They are apt now, as their fathers once were apt, to be tolerant of insincerity in themselves and in others, and to read the world in a cynical spirit. But cynicism and sincerity have no common ground, and toleration of faults is an entirely different thing from charity. A cynical man is not in earnest; a sincere man cannot be other than in earnest. He who is tolerant of the more contemptible side of human nature is certainly not actuated therein by brotherly love. The cynical take human nature as they see it in its three-score

years and ten, and shut their eyes alike to its origin and its destination. There is no love of truth in such an attitude ; no love of others ; no glorifying of God or of man. It is plain infidelity and insincerity, a vilifying of the Creator and of his creatures.

Which side dost thou take thyself ? The side of the real, or of the false, of the father of lies, or of the God of truth ?

It was said very long ago by somebody who was himself of the sort, that to be really great a man must be sincere, must mean what he says, must mean what he does ; in a word, must be so much in love with truth and reality that not only are his words and acts a genuine expression of himself, but the end and aim of his life is the discovering and divulging of truth. Sincerity at its best is a comprehensive attitude of character, a sort of habit of the soul. The sincere man is in chase of truth. It does not matter so much whether he finds truth, but he must search for her as for hid treasure. He may be dull, and slow, and inobservant, and may search in the

wrong places ; but if he be in earnest, his disability shall not be urged against him in the day of the Lord.

It is the search for truth, rather than the desecrating of truth, which invests a life with dignity and durability. Which is the greater statesman? the man to whom it is enough that a measure be popular and likely to further his own ambitions ; or the man who in honesty and sincerity of purpose labours to meet what he believes to be the actual social and political needs of his time? The one may not indeed apprehend the needs of his time, or he may misconceive the aspirations of his contemporaries, but he has at least sought after truth. He has shown faith in God and in humanity, and to that extent he has the elements of greatness in him. And who are the writers that live? Those only who have pursued truth by some of the many paths on which her vision sometimes stands ; and of them all, the most enduring, the best beloved, are they whose eyes have been opened to that vision by the spirit of brotherly

love, so that in reading man's heart to men, they make not men cynical or self-contemptuous, but inspire a new respect for man.

The chase of truth, let me repeat, is of greater concern than the attainment of it. There is so much in regard to which man can never be sure whether he has arrived at truth or no. He must often be content to wait upon time. Often also there is nothing to be done but to wait upon the Lord, and to let eternity reveal his success or unsuccess in the pursuit of truth. Willingness to search and wait is faith. By faith alone man follows truth into the presence of God.

I do not believe that any man who has really fallen in love with truth will ever consent to give up the pursuit of her. He may have fits of disloyalty and unfaith, but on the whole he shall continue to love her. He has the habit of loving truth, and cannot live without her. Happily men are judged at the last by their ideals and their abiding attitude towards them, and not by their performance or successes. It is in abiding attitude that a

difference lies between the sincere man and the insincere, the veracious and the false, the lover of truth and the respecter of persons and conventions. The difference is a difference in kind, not of degree. No training that man can provide can make the unreal man real, or change an unbeliever into a believer. Love of truth has but one source, the Lord and giver of life. But if men can create the love of truth no more than they can create the fruits of the earth, they may nevertheless cultivate and increase the love of truth as they cultivate and increase the herbs of the field. They may increase it in themselves; they may increase it in their fellows.

Speaking as a schoolmaster, I am not sure that sincerity is not the fruit which best rewards him whose work is to dig about and dung the growing plants of human character. Sincerity is not appetite for information. Love for information may co-exist, does often co-exist, with shiftlessness and fatuity of nature. Such knowledge may leave the man's best part unfed and lean. But let there be an

appetite for truth, a love for ideas ; the character then strengthens and spreads. The sap of sincerity rises ; there is life and there is growth. Facts are not educative, unless they be used as a stuff for ideas to work upon ; whereas even erroneous ideas may educate when they are either formed or accepted from a desire to apprehend truth. Who does not recall some idea, absurd perhaps, or at least untenable, that set up such a ferment in the soul as to keep it at work for months in the eager chase of truth ? You may fill a mind with information, yet leave it perfectly inert and sterile ; but once tempt a man to speculate and you begin to educate him. Knowledge of facts there must be ; but until such knowledge begin to be fertilised, education begins not.

That this conception is just, that this ideal should be pursued, may be demonstrated, I believe, from the Gospel itself. It was thus that Jesus taught. To compel the mind to take the ideas in and turn them over and over, every means is employed for surprising

and startling; sometimes irony, sometimes paradox, sometimes exaggeration other than paradox; in a word, anything and everything which can subvert the conventional attitude of man. When a man lets an idea, a vision of truth, occupy him; suffers it to enter his heart, and as Christ says, set up a ferment there, he begins to become a spiritual being, a lover of truth, a believer in God. He is alive, and has a zest for life. He is sincere.

The love of truth is an education for the whole man, for mind and body as for character and spirit. He who is most in love with truth will be least inclined to make distinctions and see differences between intellectual truth, moral truth, spiritual truth, and—why should I not say it?—truth of body. Human nature is not made up of separate parts in juxtaposition—the spirit, the character, the mind, the body. It is one, and undivided, and indivisible. To educate one part is to educate all. That is not education of body, of mind, of soul, in which any one is made much of to the neglect of the rest. Truth

will accept no partial allegiance. She refuses to be loved at all by those who ask that in some things they may deny her.

There are some here who are aware how far the preacher himself has fallen short of this ideal—that the principal result of education should be to awaken the love of truth. There is all the more reason why he should affirm on what may perhaps be his last opportunity of addressing them, that however little he may have realised the ideal, he has at least tried to realise it. He may have searched for truth and not found her; but the finding is a small matter both for them and for himself. To love truth, and inspire others with the love of truth, is to use life for the purpose for which life was given. How great then shall be his condemnation who accepts the place of a parent for the children of others, and does not at least endeavour to teach that the search for truth, especially where truth cannot be apprehended at all without the aid of the Spirit, is life itself; that thereby regeneration sets in within the soul; a process

begins which converts that which is mortal into an immortal and ever-vigorous vitality ; that above all there is no cause to fear failure in this search if only it be eagerly pursued, forasmuch as the Judge at the last shall judge men not by their sagacity but by their persistence, not by their success but by their devotion.

I wonder if visions of truth await you whom we shall send out two days hence to go up and down among men. Will you choose convention and hypocrisy, or truth and reality ? Will the tree of your life grow out of the love of truth or of the love of self ? What will the Judge say to you in the day of the Lord ?

SERMON V

MAGNANIMITY

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.—
MATTHEW V 44.

IN other words, take God for your pattern in your treatment of those who do not love you, much more in your dealings with men in general. In your relations with one another be magnanimous in act and in thought, just as God in nature is magnanimous. The processes of nature go on entirely irrespective of the moral and spiritual attitude of man. God does not withhold his bounty from anyone simply because he is a bad man. The fields of the good fare no better for rain and sunshine than the fields of the godless. Treat one another with the like absolute

disregard of desert, with the like patient toleration, as God in nature deals with men ; and you will share in the spirit of God ; you will be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

It is conceivable, perhaps not wholly improbable, that in forty centuries the natural truth here employed by Jesus Christ twenty centuries ago to expound and affirm the moral and spiritual obligation to magnanimity, may have become matter of common knowledge, and even of common acknowledgement ; but who can bring himself to believe that in any number of centuries whatsoever the virtue of magnanimity, which it is used to enforce, will manifest itself as an inherent and inseparable property of human character ? After two thousand years of Christian progress there are still heard in Christian churches prayers that ignore and belie the doctrine of Christ, that the divine government of the natural world is not concerned with the moral behaviour, or the spiritual attitude of men. It is not likely that the subtle spiritual quality,

of which it is taken as the sample, will ever be adopted except by the remnant.

The superstitious belief in supernatural visitations and interventions may indeed be discarded ; the magnanimity of God in the government of nature may indeed be at last confessed by the voice of man ; but confessing is not imitating. Jesus nowhere says that the teaching of Christ will be accepted by all. The world must first become not merely the Christian Church ; it must change to the kingdom of God, the very body of Christ, before magnanimity become at all a common principle of human action. So long as men are men there must be dross of hate and revenge, malice and resentment, pettiness and uncharitableness, misconstruction and attributing of motives, requiring to be purified in human character, to be transmuted painfully and laboriously by all who would imitate God into the undimmed gold of magnanimity.

Christ here speaks of magnanimity as an essential attribute of God, that may be re-

produced in man, as made in the image of God, reproduced consciously by imitation. Such in effect is the meaning of the words, "That you may become the children of your Father which is in heaven"—an interpretation confirmed, if any wish to have it confirmed, by the concluding phrase of the passage, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

It is a truth long since perceived and accepted that the one faculty which differences men from beasts, and confers the aptitude for progress, is just the capacity for imitating, to which the teaching of Jesus assigns so momentous a part in the spiritual education of man. It is a faculty so spontaneous, so easily developed, as to be legitimately termed instinctive. Mankind owe the better part of their progress to imitation. By its operation every generation may begin where the generation next before it left off. It is the lasting condition and basis of all the arts and the sciences. It is the source of literature, even of language itself. The

instinct of imitation is a law as universal in its application to thought as the law of gravitation is to nature. Human existence cannot be imagined divorced from it.

If I watch children at play, I see for myself how the imitative process began which enriches the world with masterpieces in sculpture and architecture, in design and painting, in drama and story. Children reproduce everything and anything they see about them. They play in the market-place at a wedding or at a funeral; they buy and sell; they entertain and receive entertainment. Every phase of the life of their elders is an occasion for mimicry. The senses' highest office is to minister to this handmaid of progress. Because it is so, because the mind of man works naturally in imitation, a man's surroundings are immeasurably important, example has infinite moral significance, the incarnation possesses a tremendous spiritual import.

The methods of educating most often employed by Jesus Christ recognise and

involve, completely and unreservedly, this primary law of thought. It is his habit to express, so to say, spiritual truths in earthly terms, that they may be made the more easy for men to realise and copy. In the incarnation, in his life as the Son of man, Christ addresses to men the parable of parables, whereby they may learn how God himself would act in man's place. The reason is entirely satisfied by the adequacy and the simplicity of the means. Believe in the Godhead of Jesus ; have faith in the Word ; then suffer the most powerful, the most active, instinct of thy nature to assert itself. Imitate Jesus, and thou shalt imitate Christ and God.

Can there be a better way for overcoming the pettinesses, the resentments, the querulousness, the malice and uncharitableness, of which the heart is conscious, than by imitating with the whole strength that he himself confers, the divine perfection of attitude manifested in the Son of man? Shall man be ever able to forgive, unless he take

Christ's spirit as exemplar for his own? Shall he ever share in the peace of God, unless he imitate the love of God divulged to him in the charity of Jesus?

Study God in his life among men, the Son of man moving among the sons of men; watch the supreme patience, the generous consideration, the dignity of bearing, the serenity of spirit, which are the plain expression of the divine magnanimity in Jesus Christ. 'Tis the Spirit of God made capable of imitation by human nature. 'Tis in a word the ideal of conduct, wherein self-respect and self-effacement are reconciled. 'Tis the human counterpart of the justice of God united with the love and the mercy of God.

It would seem as though at one time some particular virtue were more difficult to practise than at another, some vice or fault of character more common. Circumstances often determine the prevailing virtues and vices of a period in the life of a man or of a community. The soul of man knows it. At times even magnanimity appears to come

easily, and pettiness to be detestable; and the soul flatters itself that ideals are after all not unattainable, whereas it is not the soul that has improved, but the soul's surroundings. The self-flatterer's house is swept and garnished for the old spirit to re-enter with a following of seven.

That temptation takes its shape and colour from circumstances explains perhaps the apparent dearth of magnanimity at the present time. Even the church has experience of the famine. Where the virtue of magnanimity should be most conspicuous, pettiness of spirit and readiness to misinterpret and misrepresent are not uncommon; and these declare themselves in respect to questions that for an adult understanding, to say nothing of the Christian temper, have no sort of consequence. Men in a rage are not magnanimous, and perhaps men lose their temper most about things that do not matter. Magnanimity is a plant whose roots go deep down in the strong, generous soil of conviction and reason and justice, whereas temper

thrives best in hot and hungry ground. If Jesus, who knew all men, was magnanimous, then men within the church of Christ, wholly unable as they are to read the heart, might at least reserve judgment in respect to the motives from which others act, or might even interpret their actions magnanimously. Motives are puzzling things. They are often composite when they are thought to be simple, and partake in good when they seem to be wholly evil. The magnanimous man is more likely to be right in his verdicts upon others than the harsh or the cynical. It is a sound principle for the judge of his neighbour to give his neighbour credit for at least as pure motives as the judge himself likes to take credit for. 'Tis a vast help to the judgment, and it makes some degree of equity possible in the interpretation of conduct.

If to imitate the magnanimity of Jesus is an ideal constantly forgotten at the present time in the church which Jesus founded, it is not surprising that in politics and in society there should be some lack of magnanimity. Even

the rules of the game, the show and semblance of magnanimity, are neglected. Men will not shake hands before the swords cross. Is it the case that men are too much in earnest to think of compliments? It cannot be so. Belief in the justice of a cause, earnestness of conviction and in purpose, the desire to see truth prevail, are qualities that demand good company. They are more in keeping with magnanimity than with jealousy and bitterness, uncharitableness and recrimination. The tranquillity of spirit and the self-respect begotten of magnanimity are better fitted to advance truth and a just cause than excited feeling and neglect of good manners.

Those in this congregation whose position to-day compels both sympathy and interest perhaps ask themselves why the preacher has selected such a subject as this for their consideration, at a time when their thoughts rather incline to linger lovingly over their boyhood, or dwell hopefully on the anticipated triumphs of manhood. It is because manhood now begins for them that he so speaks.

Unless the signs of the times are ill discovered, they are sure in regard to many great national interests and public movements to need magnanimity sorely. "It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering." Times of shock and tumult are at hand, when old ideas must make good their place, or else give ground before the new. Untried social forces are marshalling for war against old-established conditions. There is no saying what the end will be ; but this much may be foretold : that the character of the conflict will primarily depend upon the spirit and temper in which it is fought out. Anyone can see what a difference magnanimity may make if exercised by one side or by both, by few or by many, in a great struggle. Fight, I beseech you, like men, delighting in the play and clash of swords, and not like children or angry women, sulking or scolding, or calling names. Put all your strength into each stroke, but let it be a fair, not a foul stroke. Let your weapon be the clean white blade of argument and reason. Keep the conflict a war of ideas,

and not of classes or interests ; or it may change, as this century has more than once seen it change, into "a battle of the warrior with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood."

SERMON VI

THE VALUE OF IDEALISM IN COMMON LIFE

The voice of him that crieth, In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.—ISAIAH xl 3.

NOT long ago in debating with somebody what he should do to make a living I suggested that he might become a servant of the crown in India. His reply startled me, "But do not Englishmen often succumb to the climate?" Others may have thought in the same way before, but to me at least the thought had never been so bluntly expressed. That any capable, generous young Englishman should take life in so calculating a spirit was enough to set me thinking whether there was anything in the circumstances of the time which could explain so unusual a contradiction to the natural attitude of youth towards adventure and enterprise. Here was a man,

belonging to the generation which in twenty years time should form the core and pith of the state, who as judged out of his own mouth seemed to believe that the best success in life is—living.

As I questioned experience and sought to watch other straws that, like this answer, might indicate how the current of sentiment was setting, the signs on the whole seemed to declare that in this age, which prides itself upon its intellectual and spiritual conquests, the temptation is as powerful as ever to over-estimate the life of the body, and to put carnal well-being and length of days before ideals and before such spiritual facts as self-sacrifice ; or, as Isaiah says in the passage from which the text is taken, to prefer “ the flesh and the goodliness thereof ” to “ the spirit of the Lord and the word of our God.” I shrink from calling the temptation stronger now than in the past ; but if it be the case that men give over crying with their forefathers, “ Life to him that has courage to lose it ! ” and begin, as I think they do, to cry shamefully, “ Life

to him that has the sense to keep it!" the body is certain ere long completely to master the spirit. But be the case which it may, there is now, as in the age of Isaiah, some need to ruminate that the flesh and the goodness thereof make not the sum and substance of human life, but that life has dignity, and partakes in permanence just so far as it submits itself to those influences which from their nature must be at odds with the flesh—the voice from on high, the Spirit of the Lord that bloweth upon man, the Word of his God.

When the prophet speaks of himself as the voice of one crying, he would lay down the burden of the flesh, and become spiritual as his message. Before a man can be called the voice of one crying, he must be detached, as it were, from the life of the flesh, divorced from human relationships, sexless, without a history. To himself the flesh and the appurtenances of the flesh have been as steps climbed, upon which he may look down and back, yet not descend; but if he be held

worthy to become thereafter the voice of one crying, others had better be unacquainted with his clambering, or the voice may be diminished in ring and compass.

That this truth is in the present day wholly ignored: and wholly ignored it certainly is: cannot be otherwise interpreted than as a plain sign that men are as much tempted as ever to deny the ideal and to magnify the flesh.

This might with truth be described as an age of biographies. Biographies often colossal, and alas! too often the biographies of churchmen, appear every other month. By itself this is a demonstration that men do not now believe in the inherent permanence and essential impersonality of ideas. But not content with thus lowering or destroying the fullest tones in the crying voices of their own time, they rummage everywhere in hidden nooks and forgotten corners for the means to disendow the voices of the old prophets of some at least of their spiritual message. They lament that there can be no

biography of either Isaiah or of either Elias. They compass sea and land to discover how Shakespeare clambered upwards, or Dante, or Chaucer; and if by accident an inch or two of the worm-eaten steps remain, they peer at them for marks of a stumble or of a halt, and rejoice if they seem to trace it. The voice crying, the Spirit of the Lord calling aloud by these men, is not enough: it is too impalpable and ideal. The picture of a man's person must be made up by the aid of dates and periods, of details concerning his friends and acquaintance, his habits and tricks, his looks and gestures. Even with the life of lives as God has let men see it—I say it with reverence—some men are ill content; and they would try to clothe the crying voice of the Son of man himself with the goodliness of flesh. Yet to contemplate the manner of that record should surely disclose how God would have man regard the material, carnal setting of a human life.

The two genealogies in the gospels are and always will be a puzzle. The year in

which Jesus was born is uncertain. His age at the crucifixion is unknown. There is a lasting doubt as to the precise day of his death. It is left obscure whether he had younger brothers and sisters or no. Of definite notes of time in his life there are few, fewer far than are required to make the narrative clear. There is not one phrase or word in the gospels descriptive of his bodily presence. Even of his sepulchre no man knoweth unto this day. There must be design here. This dwelling upon the voice crying, this neglect of all material incidents in the life of him who cries, cannot be mere accident. God would never have denied to men the knowledge of this side of such a life if the knowledge could be of moral or spiritual use. If faith and love and hope, if strength and force of character, could have been augmented thereby, men would have been permitted to see in their exact correlation all the incidents in the life of the Son of man. It would have been made possible for anyone to contemplate his bodily image, to trace his

history from childhood, to reduce his work to a precise chronological order ; in a word, to materialise, or at least to de-spiritualise, the life of man's spiritual master. Instead, it abides for everlasting the voice of one crying. Jesus is the Word, and the Word only.

This is a tremendous lesson. It is a veritable arraignment of the view prevailing now, unabashed and assertive, whereby it is thought good to perpetuate the most trivial material accidents of men's lives. Some who, if only let be, might have been for ages crying voices, prophets of the Highest, are degraded and despoiled by ill-judging biographers, who in truth's name lay bare the life, not of the man whom they pretend to honour, but of his meaner and mortal double. Of the greater men in any generation—poets, orators, preachers, prophets—biographies should not be written. Let them be as voices crying. If in that cry they have delivered themselves in some measure from the material encumbrances of life, let them be advantaged thereby themselves and ad-

vantage their hearers. Why replace the voice in its fleshly tabernacle? If biographies had been in fashion in the past, the spiritual heritage bequeathed by the past could not have been so rich as it is. They that are voices crying for everlasting, bidding the wilderness to rejoice and the desert to blossom as the rose, prophets of Israel, prophets of Greece, and of Italy, and of England, would still be tied fast in the chain of their carnal infirmities, men earthly, and unspiritual, and mortal.

It is not so easy to condemn the goodliness of the flesh that men can afford to surround anew with their carnal environment those whose crying voices help others to understand that he lives best who most effectually detaches himself from the earthly and the carnal, from love of life, love of self, love of fame, and seeks to become but the voice of one crying.

It is possible by art to preserve for very many years the bodies of men in a sort of ghastly caricature of those who once wore

them. The practice of biographers resembles the art of embalmers. For a shorter time or a longer it preserves from entire decay that which had better be suffered to perish; but it cannot aid in perpetuating the crying voice, or the spirit that begotten from God partakes in God's eternity and infinitude. Nay, it tends to abridge the voice's compass and to curtail the spirit's power to save.

This criticism, however inadequate and fragmentary, of one noteworthy tendency of the day may serve to bring home to speaker and hearer both, that they have one prime duty—to separate themselves by the strength of Christ, and according to the example of Jesus, from the circle of ideas to which this idea pertains, that the greatest success in life is the postponing of bodily death.

Let me be forgiven if I now address more particularly those of the audience in whose imaginations the present brief week shapes itself at one moment as the last week of boyhood and in the next as the first week of manhood. It was not one of them who asked

if a man did not risk an early death by going to India; nevertheless, some time they may be tempted to think with him, and it is well for all to be often reminded of that which the Bible declares to be the first duty of man.

The temptations which you will meet with, whether at the university or in society elsewhere, are perhaps not so grossly material as those which young men in past generations have often experienced, but they are certainly more subtle, and just as hazardous. The voices of the prophets and false prophets are crying all round you. The din made by the false prophets is so loud that it is not easy to hear the true. But when the ear grows accustomed to the clamour, there is no mistaking the voice of a true prophet. Distinguish him by the note in his crying, not by what others tell you about him. Many who, like David, are true prophets, have yet at times in their lives been enthralled by the goodness of the flesh. Nor think to hear the prophet's voice more distinctly by giving way to the childish craze, now so easily grati-

fied, of making a pilgrimage to the scene of his earthly life. There is one place only, no doubt, in all the world that is part and parcel of a man's being, the fields, namely, on which his eyes first opened, the home wherein he grew ; but it is presumptuous to imagine that you can see with his eyes fields or home. Nor yet seek your prophets by the aid of newspapers, magazines, or reviews. You will hardly hear the voices crying there, but you may thus lose the best instrument to find them with, your concentration of mind, your strength of will.

Even those of you whose one ideal for the present is to excel in manly exercises, will yet give ear to the true voice, not the false, if they treat the game impersonally, so to speak, esteeming a feat a feat in itself, quite apart from the man who performs it. In other words, learn as little as you can of the private lives of great cricketers, football-players, and sportsmen.

I hope you will all think me impertinent for bidding you not to be influenced in the

choice of a profession by any thought of its perils, but only by the conviction that, more than other professions, it will call out your manhood. Nor simply follow with the crowd the line of least resistance. It is no doubt the duty of everybody to support himself as soon as he can, but there is no reason why a strong young man should have luxuries, or require a long holiday every year, or constant amusement or pleasant surroundings. Let him be strong and endure; then all else will come of itself. There are voices crying aloud to him, as to all, that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth; that even the Son of man had not where to lay his head.

“In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

SERMON VII

REALITY

It is lawful to do well.—MATTHEW xii 12.

THOUGH I may not judge another, I may be aware that his attitude disarms for the time even omnipotence of the power to help him. Though I may not condemn another, I may nevertheless feign to adopt his standpoint; then proceeding from it by direct and honest reasoning reduce it to absurdity. Insight into character is no sin. Argument and irony are lawful instruments of persuasion, never denied by Jesus Christ to him who would become an impersonal critic of himself or of another. To search for truth is neither to judge nor to condemn a fellow-man, but rather to assist him. They who inquired if it was lawful to

heal on the sabbath day may have been so blinded by self-complacency as not to understand the irony in the answer, "It is lawful to do well"; yet that answer is become an unspent treasure of truth for the self-despairing.

Jesus employs irony most often with the Pharisees, but occasionally even with his disciples when they fall into the sin of Pharisees; as with the two brothers, who made sure that they could drink of the same bitter cup and be submerged in the same sea of suffering as himself; and with them all together, when even at the last they misconceived the character of his work, saying in their self-deception, "Here are two swords," and he said, "It is enough."

In dealing thus with deliberate and self-willed blindness Jesus gives not that which is holy unto the dogs, nor casts his pearls before swine. He takes the prejudiced at their own valuation. Pharisees are, he knows, so completely satisfied with their privileged condition, their federal relation to God, that nothing can

persuade them that they need saving. Did they not cast his teaching in his teeth even as he died, "He saved others, he cannot save himself"? They are such staunch adherents of the letter that they are absolved from the spirit. They are not as other men are; they have eschewed extortion, injustice, adultery, from their youth up; they fast; they support missions; they build churches; they pay God money; they need no mercy like common men. Therefore Jesus takes them at their word. He assumes their point of view, and by the arguments of a scribe proves in despairing irony the legality of doing good, even on the sabbath day.

Tranquil as it appears, this irony has nevertheless its counterpart in the tempestuous indignation of the woes pronounced by Jesus Christ upon Pharisees. In the one case 'tis a man implying, not even expressing, rebuke; suggesting in a tone which need scarcely disturb the hearers' self-contentment that men may so fall in love with untruth as to lose the perception of truth. In the other

case 'tis the Judge of men exercising his office. The irony of Jesus is an admission of the limitations imposed by the human will upon the power of God. It is the Son of man himself who says, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

What is this which disables the Almighty, which makes man as unconscious of holiness as though he were a dog, as reckless of the pearl of truth as any swine? It is only the preferring of the letter to the spirit. It is self-righteousness. It is the playing the part of the servant of God rather than the being the servant of God. It is unreality. It is not hypocrisy in the English sense of the word, because hypocrisy is conscious, whereas Pharisees believe themselves to be accepted of God. This is precisely what makes their attitude so desperate. It is not unbelief; it is perverted belief. It is not exactly worldliness; it is a worldly religion. It is religion without the spirit. It is the "form of godliness without the power." It is religiosity. It is ecclesiasticism. The unreal man says, "I

thank God that I am not as other men are.” “All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?” “Lord, Lord, when saw I thee an-hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?” “Have I not prophesied in thy name and in thy name cast out devils?” “I am able to drink of thy cup.” He does not say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

I have chosen this subject because there are some in this congregation who as inheritors of a privilege have for the last five or six years prayed daily in this church, and now are about to surrender this privilege; and because the preacher also has had a privilege now to be surrendered, so far at least as these worshippers are concerned, the privilege of reminding them from this pulpit that the cardinal instrument of education is submissiveness to the spirit of Jesus Christ.

What have these two privileges produced between them? self-distrust, or self-satisfaction? a love of truth, or of untruth? devotion

to the reality of ideals, or absorption in the unrealities of the world? Each must answer for himself. None can bare his soul to his fellow. If he can say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," then Jesus Christ has not turned from him, saying, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." If he knows that he has broken every law, Jesus has not said to him, "It is lawful to do good," but only, "Where are thine accusers? go and sin no more."

There are always so many questions that men call urgent and momentous vexing the world, that it is tranquillising and invigorating to seek the well of truth and Him who sits thereby. For to drink thereof is to discover that after all, these things are neither so urgent nor so momentous as men conceive. They ask, "Is it lawful to do this or to do that?" as though Jesus had never said, "It is lawful to do good." They are troubled with much service, as though Jesus had never told the laborious Martha that her sister had chosen better than she. They magnify the church,

and forget the frequent sayings of its founder that the church is not conterminous with the kingdom of God. They make much of doctrines and uses which at best are only the appurtenances of an organisation, and at worst are contrary to the unglossed teaching of Jesus Christ.

In these many questions and controversies they who now go out from this school must in the natural order of things take a part, and perhaps may some of them some day play a great part. But whether their place be humble or considerable, they will help to determine great questions in the best way only if to their solving they bring the conviction that the spirit is everything and the letter nothing. They must fight very often on what seems to be the losing side. That is not of consequence. Who can tell in any particular case that in God's sight defeat is not more valuable than victory? But it is of consequence that at least one man has not taken a side from want of thought, or from prejudice, or from respect for public opinion,

or from interested motives, but has sincerely endeavoured to explore the truth, and to contemplate the naked spirit hid by the letter of such unrealities and deceptions.

Truth has not become very much more easy to discover since Pilate's day. The spirit of Christ has no doubt acted as a leaven, but Christ himself says that it will never leaven all mankind. There will always be elder brothers who need no repentance, as well as penitent prodigals and abashed sinners. Christ must always be arguing, "It is lawful to do good." For is there not another leaven at work among men, that which was once named the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod? Christ has still to say to men, as Jesus said to his disciples, "Do ye not yet understand?" He has still to say in patient irony when men declare that they have swords wherewith to lop off Malchus' ear, "It is enough." Human nature is still, and will always remain, loth to confess that the spirit alone imparts truth.

I know well that some here with whom I

have lived like father with sons for some years have seen at least in a measure what this means, and thereby have quickened the life of a little community. Will they go on seeking after truth and reality, and thus in groping faith send the same spirit out from them, growing, as they themselves grow, to greater strength? They may not easily see the effect; but effect there will be notwithstanding. If they take orders, will they try the effect of the spirit first? Even St Paul had often to argue that the spirit is more effectual than organisation. Is it certain that no warning is needed now? Even St Paul had to fight during his whole life against the bondage of the letter. Is such bondage unheard of now? If they become schoolmasters, I wonder whether they will try first if spiritual fire, kindled by their own earnestness inspired by Christ, will melt the indolence of their boys, before they try the newest method for packing an unwilling brain with information?

And here I cannot but speak of a matter

that has moved me. There is a project now carrying out to exhibit what is called education in what is called an English Education Exhibition. Either the name is misused, or it is implied that education is a visible process analogous to the visible processes by which one material thing is converted into another material thing, wool into cloth, rags or fibre into paper, hides into leather, or—to offer a sort of opening for argument—food-stuffs into bone and flesh. To my mind, I say it in reverence, such an exhibition is as impossible as an exhibition of the gospel. Nevertheless, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge have given their adhesion to the project, and not a few of the great public schools. The one essential thing is ignored, the accidents are exalted. With Busby's ashes resting a few feet from this pulpit, and with Arnold commemorated in another place in this church, I venture to affirm that to imagine that any such scheme is calculated to advance education is to misunderstand the spirit of Christ as much as the eleven misunderstood it when they said,

“Lord, here are two swords,” and in irony Jesus answered, “It is enough.”

The improving of mechanical methods, and the perfecting of details in management and organisation that there be as few obstacles as possible to the march of the spirit, are necessary things, which at one time were neglected no less than more excellent things in English schools; but the danger now is that being easier, and needing only time and money, method or organisation may be pursued as an end, whereas it is only an instrument conducing to the end. So little are such mechanical methods effective in themselves, that in any school, if they are to aid the spirit, they must be created by the spirit, so much so that what works well in one school may work ill in another. As no two faces are exactly alike, no two minds, no two characters, so no two schools can be alike. They have different antecedents, and are different: and if men try to impose uniformity of method upon all, they will to that extent impede education, and diminish the sole unify-

ing force, the one spirit which can transmit itself through the most diverse systems and make their effects one.

Whatever business or profession these sons who now go forth from this home may adopt, they will find therein, if indeed they have been educated, not merely instructed here, a field for un-Pharisaic self-dissatisfaction, un-Pharisaic devotion to the ideal. If at any time they begin to think that they have cause to be well pleased with themselves, to be satisfied with what they know, to flatter themselves with their good deeds, their visiting of the sick, their clothing of the naked, with the completeness and certainty of their creed, the punctiliousness of their religious observances, the frequency of their bodily presence in church, their willingness to seek the spirit when other men are content with the letter, their grasp of truth, their power of will, in one word, their superiority to other men—then they have either never had, or they have lost, the one element in human conduct which is distinctively Christian—an

undivulged discontent with themselves, an unconfessed self-despair, an uncommunicated sense of failure, a reticent self-indictment, an unrevealed self-abasement, a secret acknowledgement of sin, a prayer for mercy when the door is shut to, when in faltering obedience to the bidding of their master they say to God who seeth in secret, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

SERMON VIII

THE SCHOOLING OF THE WILL FOR JESUS CHRIST'S SERVICE

*Barnabas exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they
would cleave unto the Lord.*—ACTS xi 23.

MANY men are apt to let day follow day in an uncertain and shiftless sequence. Any absorbing purpose shaping the lives of others seems to them something superhuman, and their own love of ease and self-indulgence are therefore hardly rebuked thereby. Nevertheless, all are attracted by any instance of momentous ends achieved through tenacity of purpose. They look on and envy; sometimes they try to copy; and if they copy, then they also in their turn set a-going the everlasting spiritual force of controlled and controlling will. The force itself they may not be competent to measure, but they feel

and know that it alters them for the better, and that virtue goes forth therefrom towards others also.

Who does not know the helpless perplexity that comes up over the mind like a mist when an unfamiliar subject is tackled? It is an inextricable tangle of disordered details; but when the thoughts have for a time been bent upon it, order arises gradually out of the chaos, and the isolated facts begin to group themselves along lines of first principles, easy to grasp and to remember. In much the same way life seems first of all to be a veritable tumult of contradicting impulses, opposing wills, drifting habits, flung at each other in disorder. In one sense it is as it seems; nobody can hope to reconcile the sundry conflicting forces; nevertheless, it is in the power of anyone who desires to be a profitable servant of God and of man to drive at least through his own life straight and well-marked lines along which his thoughts and actions shall travel. These lines are simple spiritual principles designated by

common names—truth, love, faith, hope, and the like. But before he can drive these lines through life, a man must school his will. He must be steadfast in effort, tenacious, resolved.

Stedfastness in purpose is sometimes said to be the outgrowth of character, and so in some degree it is ; but it is also undoubtedly creative of character. Nobody can go on for long controlling by the spirit of Christ imagination, thought, and action in order to serve some definite purpose without by the same process enriching and purifying the source from which this controlling power springs. Will begets will. After each exertion of self-control a man becomes better able to exert it again. The opposite is of course true also. Weakness and uncertainty of purpose is a disease which eats the will away and produces a decay in character. Every surrender of a purpose prepares the way for worse surrenders, till in the end even the capacity for making resolves at all is lost. A man gets into the way of taking the turn that for the moment seems easiest. He begins to

follow at all times the line of least resistance. He is content to drift.

To train the intelligence, say the men of this generation, is indispensable; but they often forget that to put the will to school is somewhat more profitable. He who rules his will can compel his intelligence to serve him. What does thought profit if it has no precise work set it by the will? A weak will can make plenty of thinking unprofitable or pernicious. The thinking of men who have no force of will is as unsubstantial as moonshine. The moonshine may bewitch, but it shows things neither as they are nor as they should be; whereas will and purpose are like strong, searching, vitalising sunlight, conferring reality and the sense of power.

He is a poor creature, weak himself and infecting others with infirmity, who has no definite purpose of one kind or another. Even a humble purpose is better than none at all. An aim of any sort goes for much. An aimless life arouses suspicion. Things cannot be quite right with me, if my familiar

friend cannot discover whether I have an aim in life or no. None can be entirely without interests or pursuits, and those in whom nothing of the kind is apparent lay themselves open to the suspicion that they have interests so little to their credit that they prefer to keep them hid.

Very different it is with him who has learned the secret of purpose of heart. Till he learned it he may have had a certain willingness to do what men expected from him, but there were no leaps or bounds, no impetuous, irresistible rush forward. It was a jog-trot and no race. For such is the difference which purpose of heart makes. It quickens all the powers. It is manhood.

Nature is the raw material from which each should make the best and richest stuff he can. This must be his prime aim and purpose. But it is an aim too abstract and ideal to be clearly apprehended and followed from the first. It is realised only by degrees. At all events I conceive that such is the course by which, if they look back, most men

who have endeavoured to use life well, will see that they have travelled. They first by chance, or the good guidance of the Word, discover a purpose more or less humble, then as they chase it, the prospect widens until they come out upon rising ground from which there is a view backwards over the country already traversed, and forwards also towards a fertile land growing many things that at their setting out they would have thought it presumptuous to covet. They may, or they may not, have made good the paltry aim which they have pursued, but they have certainly found the way whereby alone the true end of life is reached—the steep and narrow track climbing the mount of God.

Such are the steps by which character widens, broadens, and deepens. Let the zest and charm conferred upon life by purpose of heart be once revealed, and the man is willing to sacrifice anything, even life itself, rather than surrender them. He is engrossed in his chase and burns with enthusiasm, and surmounts obstacles that once would have

checked or intimidated him. This is no race to exhaust the powers, but rather to nerve and exhilarate, every step forward augmenting alacrity, not lassitude ; force, not weariness.

He learns judgment and discretion too in this journey. He may have begun by doing a great deal too much, going straight up hill and down dale right for his aim. By-and-bye he learns to mend his rate of progress by skirting a hill, by going round a crag, even by travelling back many stages in order to take a new turning. Knowledge and wisdom and self-distrust carry him forward more quickly than his old hurry and confident impetuosity.

At the root of all true schooling of the will, you know and I know, lies the informing Spirit that proceeds from God and from Christ. If the heart be open to receive this Spirit, then it is as if the soil were prepared for the plant purpose to grow in. Character ripens, manhood increases, life is expounded. The man will not go back into the mire of jealousy and self-will and indolence and self-indulgence and other things that cling and soil,

for he has breathed the clear, invigorating, nimble air of the delectable mountains. He is alive when before he was dead. The creeds do not puzzle him. He is not concerned with the plan of salvation, the economy of grace, or any other catchword of the schools. The everlasting controversies of theology are debated afresh, and the church he loves takes to old fashions or invents new, but he takes no heed. These are things outside the soul's life, apart from his aim, "to cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart."

SERMON IX

PROPHECY

Thou shalt be called the prophet of the Highest.—LUKE i 76.

THE word prophet is no longer used in the sense which it commonly bears in the translation of the Bible. There it seldom means a foreteller of the future. It is employed rather of one who so speaks forth or out another's mind as to interpret his purpose and thoughts. A good deal therefore of the Bible is ill understood or wholly misunderstood if the words prophet, prophesy, and prophecy are taken in the narrow sense in which alone they are now used, and not in their older larger meaning.

God did not reveal ordinary historical events to the Jews any more than he now reveals them to Englishmen. Revelation is a thing purely spiritual. Hence the scores of errors, and inaccuracies, and downright

contradictions between one writer and another in respect to matters of ordinary history narrated in the Bible are inevitable there as in every other history, and need not surprise anyone who has once grasped firmly the distinction between the two kinds of truth, that which the Spirit of God alone can make known, and that which men may record if they like for themselves.

But if in the Bible there is no prediction of common things ; if the sundry writers are left to themselves in their presentment of what befalls to men and nations in time, there is undoubtedly a revelation by the Spirit of God of momentous facts—the coming of a Saviour and the existence of a kingdom of God—which man could never discover or record for himself. These are spiritual truths for which time does not count ; they are not incidents to be classed as present, past, or future in any historical sequence. They differ altogether from battles, sieges, victories, and defeats. Of the prediction of such things there was no

more in Palestine than there may be in Europe now. The mission of the prophets was not to foretell disasters or triumphs, though these they sometimes were competent to foresee, as they may still be foreseen by sagacious observers of the drift of history. Rather it resembled the mission of the last of the prophets, John the Baptist himself. They went before the face of the Lord to prepare his way, their thoughts ever directed to things above rather than to things before. There can be no prophet of the Highest whose eye is not always turned towards something still unrealised—so far the vulgar conception of his office is true,—but it is merely an accident if that something is fulfilled in the future. His function is to interpret God's will. He carries men's thoughts up to God; he does not bring the secrets of the future into the present. He cries: This is God's purpose, but not: God reverses the law of man's creation as a creature in time, and by me draws the veil from the future. He is the mouthpiece of God to men because he seeks

inspiration from God, and thereby can give men glimpses of the love of God, the mercy of God, the justice of God, the power of God. These all are things spiritual and eternal and infinite, to which from their very nature the ideas of past, present, and future cannot attach. To understand these, and teach men these, is to be a prophet of the Highest, a very different thing from a prophet of the future, or a recorder of the present or the past in the shifting scene of passing time, the rise or the fall of empires, the founding or the overthrow of dynasties, the progress or the decay of civilisations, "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them."

The one kind of prophecy is not worth attempting, but may be left to fortune-tellers and the like impostors; whereas to seek to be a prophet of the Highest is after all nothing less than to try to be a child of God and a citizen of his kingdom. When a man is in love with ideals, and would make them loved by others, he is in that measure a prophet of the Highest, "the voice of one

crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The voice is his who putting himself in God's hand, and seeking to be his prophet, gives life and strength and faculties to enlarge the kingdom of heaven.

How is a man to live that God may through his life reveal himself to others?

First, no doubt, he must grasp the idea of God as at once supreme over man, and dependent upon man for the advancement of his purpose among men. This is the burden of the prophets—the thought of infinite spiritual power controlling the universe by unaltered purpose certain to be fulfilled, nevertheless advanced or retarded by man. At any time the bulk of mankind may be unconscious of this purpose or careless for its fulfilment, and so far as they are so, may fail to forward God's decree. But there is also at any time a minority or remnant to whom God's purpose is a reality, perhaps the only reality in life, who see that there can be but one issue to God's purpose, and that for the

acceleration of that issue they may make themselves God's instruments.

The man who by God's help converts this conception into a daily force and familiar influence is become a prophet of the Highest; as indeed is also he who at times is enabled to direct his life thereby.

All who try to become prophets are often down-hearted, I daresay, at the small measure of their success. It often seems as though the world, indifferent to ideals, perverse, deaf to the Word, must laugh at the remnant and their endeavours; and the remnant is tempted to give up prophesying and to join the majority. Yet those who on the whole cling to the Word are to that extent prophets of God.

Anything that lends significance and elevation to life should be welcomed; and this thought does that. It can sustain men when their worst instincts and passions threaten to overwhelm the spirit altogether. It can harden them to maintain the seemingly desperate fight of knowledge with ignorance. It

gives heart and hope even when things go worst.

In a week or two a whole school-generation will go forth from this place. All of these, I may hope, will side with the remnant; but there is a risk that some will side with the majority. Nevertheless, why should not all accept the call to be prophets of the Highest? If the thought is once become familiar, it will not be readily discarded or easily remain unfruitful. Let it run like a guiding thread through the maze of life.

If you go to college, it will save you from what is one of the worst temptations there, the temptation to think that learning stops with the measure of knowledge attainable by a man of twenty-five, and that any means, however mechanical and unintelligent, is sound, if by it that measure can be filled up the more easily. To regard life in that way is to betray the remnant. No man can be a prophet whose life is untrue to conscience. It will surely be one of the rewards, not the most precious indeed, but still precious, vouchsafed

to the remnant in the end—that they will understand what they had not understood; that their reason will move unimpeded and unconfined over all that now baffles and torments the intelligence.

I do not know how it is that the old attitude in respect of education at school and college begins to give way. It used to be thought that the studies there were merely the gateway to knowledge, not knowledge itself. You can help to bring the right view back. On you who go to college I urge this above all: Do not lose faith in the possibility of discovering more and more truth. If learning and investigation have no other function, they have at least this, that they are the nursery of ideas, when ideas are the food by which man grows. If all men learned the same things, and these only up to the contemptible limit represented by university examinations, the mind of the race would starve. Let us rather endeavour in this sense as in others to become the interpreters of God to men. Every true thought launched

by us upon the world, every new aspect of an old truth made familiar, is a revelation of God made by God himself through us, his prophets.

As in the lower field of intellect, so in the moral and the spiritual field we may take the same road. We must let God speak to us, if we would have him speak through us. He speaks in a thousand ways. If we do not hear, it is because we are not simple enough. We ask, perhaps, how that can be a message from the Source of all Knowledge and power which claims nothing save what a child gives best, unreasoning trust, ill based faith. It does not square with our pride that we should in this be no better than the young and the simple. Or we ask again, how the Spirit of God can dwell in the hearts of men, when in the heart we know best his influence seems so feeble and slow. But has not the Word himself declared that the leaven of the kingdom of heaven ferments slowly? The spirit of Christ is there, if the heart cherishes ideals and is eager to fight for them.

Given these two things, the faith of a child and the grown man's resolve to fight on against the temptation to betray the holy spirit of the Highest, a man is indeed a prophet. God speaks to others through him. He has the true prophet's ideal of a kingdom of God. He feels the compulsion to prepare the way of the Lord.

He will suffer, and suffer greatly. "Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross." But of the soul's possessions, past suffering is one of the most precious. The better part of what is called character is made by suffering: and if anyone has not character, that is, the strength derived from contention with passions and sins, he can have no commission from God to other men. There will be nothing about him to inspire or purify other men.

Nevertheless, he will influence other men. Even weakness has its influence. Infirmary of character is as great a curse to others as to the infirm of character himself. Moreover, there are prophets of the devil as there are prophets

of the Highest, the actively wicked and the vicious.

Nothing has ever produced in me so keen a sense of failure as the hearing that some one once well known here has flagrantly taken the wrong side. The apprehension springs up and will not be choked back that perhaps his error is the fault of his upbringing. For a school, as I have often sought to show from this place, ought to be a nursery in which the plant of character is grown under favouring conditions to such vigour and fulness of life that it can safely be transplanted into the field of the world. If in the transplanting it is dwarfed, or grows awry, men may blame its rearing, thereby disparaging the soil of the nursery, which, unlike common soil, is more enriched by the plants themselves than by the gardener's labour. In a school each sundry life contributes something to the character of all, and is itself reacted upon by all in its turn ; so that those who from time to time go forth from Westminster have inevitably the school's good name in their keeping.

Nor should the condition of the school be held right or wholesome by its lovers, so long as anyone at all can say that his character was not strengthened by his life at Westminster: And many will justly decry the fame of their school if the common life to which they look back was not penetrated by spiritual ideals like that which has occupied us this morning, whereby the purpose of God is recognised as something which men both singly and together help to fulfil.

SERMON X

WASTEFULNESS

*Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing
be lost.*—JOHN vi 12.

RICH and delicate dyes are produced from the greasy, noisome waste of gas-works, stuff once held to be dirt and refuse. The mounds of slag that have accumulated for years near iron-furnaces are now converted into useful things. Such strange reversals are sometimes recorded in the history of scientific discoveries. What is thrown away one day may be eagerly sought after the next. Nevertheless, the generations ought each to bequeath to its successors by the saving of waste a far richer inheritance than

is now bequeathed by any. As it is, the fragments are ill gathered and much is lost. Man's ignorance and carelessness and perversity are not to be measured, and in his race to be rich he contemns the slow processes of nature that wastes nothing, and cares not how much he destroys, provided his own purse fill. Perhaps there never was a time in which the gifts of the Creator were more recklessly wasted than they are wasted now. The mark of this century has been waste, the squandering of treasures amassed by nature in millions of years. Whole continents have been devastated, denuded of their forests, despoiled of their fertility, exhausted of their subterranean wealth. It is but a stage, perhaps, which must be passed through in travelling towards better things, but it is certain nevertheless that many remote generations will curse this age for taking much and giving little back, for violating nature, for defying the decree of Creation. Yet even those who curse are not likely themselves to have learned in their day all the will of the

Creator, nor is it possible to imagine a time when every secret of nature shall be known, and men shall use without waste everything which God has made.

The passage from which my text is taken describes an act similar to an act of creation, and records that he who performed that act was careful to forbid the waste of any fragment of that which was made. He made enough and to spare, yet nothing must be lost. Waste, it is implied, is irreligion.

In the feeding of the five thousand, as in the feeding of the four thousand, an essential part of the eternal process of creation was accelerated. He who executed God's will in the creation of the world, and continually executes it in the multiplying of every creature, executed it here also in the multiplying of the bread. It is this which gives extraordinary impressiveness to the words of the text. God creates for man's use, but not that man may waste. The command to gather up the fragments is, in the mouth of Jesus, the plain expression of the Creator's

will, a veritable commandment uttered by the Word himself: Thou shalt not waste.

Even if this were the only passage in the Bible which taught this lesson, it would in itself determine how God would have men deal with that portion of creation which at any time he commits to them. It declares that as often as anyone wastes either his time or his powers, or food, or clothes, or anything whatsoever, he acts as though God must provide him with more than he can use; whereas the case is just the contrary. All that God gives, he gives that it should be wisely husbanded. It is a capital to trade with, not a treasure to squander.

This is a doctrine not easy to put in practice; yet it is essential. No other conception of man's duty can be reconciled with the saying: Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost. The command is not to be explained away. It contains nothing less than what I have said. It interprets the divine theory of human life. It furnishes another ideal for men to strive after, or at least, not

wholly to forget. For it is, as I have said, one of the spoken words of the Word himself, as the miracle which gave occasion for it is a word in another kind; and his words spoken or expressed in act are the first and only source for which you or I can draw any spiritual inspiration worth the having. It is from them that we learn what the kingdom of God is; that it grows up from within and cannot be imposed from without; that the spirit of Christ is a force and not a law.

For this reason each must find out for himself how to interpret the text in matters of everyday conduct, and to answer the question: What is waste? The Jewish rabbis would have drawn up a code of rules to regulate conduct in such a case. No Christian can do that. He will nowhere find any cut and dried system of life whereby he shall enter the kingdom of heaven. There is no legislation in the gospels, but there is plenty of a better thing—suggestiveness.

There is this suggestiveness in the bidding: Gather up the fragments that remain

that nothing be lost. It helps men to determine when they should spend and when they should refrain from spending, when lavishness is in place and when careful husbanding.

Every man, body, mind, and soul, is himself God's creature. His time is God's, everything that he possesses is God's. He cannot live without either using or wasting some creature of God. There is not, nor has there ever been, anyone at all who has not lived a great part of his life awry in this respect; not one but has either forgotten again and again to gather up the fragments of his capacity, of his time, of his opportunities, or has squandered them altogether. How much bodily strength, how many gifts of mind or spirit has everyone failed to use! All have misused money; all have wasted food and drink; all have often behaved as though they were free to do as they liked with God's gifts. Who but has need to recall that the Son of God possessed of power to create, taught as the Son of man in unmistakable language that his fellow-men have no

right to waste the most insignificant fragment of created things ?

Moreover, if it is an obligation never to waste what God has bestowed for a man's own use, it is certainly as binding an obligation to refrain from wasting the bodies, or minds, or labour, or money, or belongings of others. This obligation also is constantly violated. It seems as though to most men the real motive for saving what is their own were not that it is God's gift, but that it is their own. What an incalculable sum of God's gifts is wasted, spoiled, lost, any day of the seven in an opulent country like England, because men are too careless, or thoughtless, or selfish to husband what has been acquired by the labour or riches of others ! For it is the case that the more easily a thing is got, the more likely it is to be wasted. Lightly come lightly goes. Was not this one reason why Jesus told the disciples to gather up the fragments ? The Syrian crowd then, like an English crowd to-day, would otherwise never once have thought of the waste. They

would have satisfied themselves with the gift, then, as I often see some of you doing, they would have thrown aside or even spoiled what they could not use. Men are so apt to take every blessing as their due, and to see no harm in wasting that which they do not care to use themselves. Indeed, they incline even to measure their importance by what they can afford to waste: and this attitude is encouraged, or at any rate condoned in many parts of English society at the present day, so much so, that it requires no common measure of the conviction that waste is irreligion for a man even in his own household to contend against wastefulness. The husbandry of God's gifts is so rare a thing that even when nothing is grudged the preventing merely of waste is designated by ill names. Yet wastefulness is just as much a sin as generosity is a virtue. "Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost" are words of the Son of God. The deeper this truth penetrates into the conscience, and the more it pervades the conduct,

the more opportunities there must be of imitating God's work of love in creation. There will arise thereby the means for being generous, and for creating out of superfluity new methods of serving God.

SERMON XI

SPIRITUAL AGGRESSION AND SPIRITUAL DEFENCE

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city
without walls.*—PROVERBS xxv 28.

*When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are
in peace.*—LUKE xi 21.

EVERY soul has an enemy, persistently aggressive, either avowedly in open attack, or treacherously by secret sapping and mining. It may even happen that this enemy finds no obstacles and suffers no opposition; that he has merely to take possession. A soul may lie at his mercy, as in old days an unwallèd town might be occupied by anyone who chose.

To have no rule over one's own spirit, Solomon says, is to be open to every suggestion of sin—anger, hate, malice, envy, pride, gluttony, carnal curiosity; every sundry devil

in Satan's force. The unguarded heart is theirs. They possess it; they devastate it; they destroy it; and they show its ruins to their master as their completed work, jesting withal at the simplicity of their victim and the facility of their conquest.

Judging by the form of this proverb, I have no doubt that he who made it, conceived of the human heart as in continual danger of demoniacal possession, or of attack from the enemy of man. Be this as it may, there is no room for doubt that in respect to the words of Jesus, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace"—the enemies against whom the palace must be kept are emissaries of Satan himself, devils, demons, unclean spirits.

It is now usual to ignore this conception, or to esteem its presence in the gospel as a concession to popular ideas. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the weight of evidence is in favour of its truth. The conception is not only accepted but enforced by Jesus Christ. So completely may a man's

soul be occupied by Satan that the man himself may be addressed as Satan—"He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan:" or may be spoken of as Satan's son—"Ye are of your father the devil." All the good in men may be devoured by Satan, and nothing left but refuse—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee and the eleven, that he may sift you as wheat." When the Word sows good seed in the world-field, the devil sows tares, or even catches away the seed ere it can take root. No less does Jesus Christ recognise the operation in men's hearts of Satanic agents; demons they are called, devils, or evil spirits—"If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you": "And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him": "The devil is gone out of thy daughter": "Thou dumb and deaf devil, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him": "He stood over her, and rebuked the fever": "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound these

eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

As certainly as there is a personal God, whose angels are eternally occupied in assisting and comforting men, so there is a personal devil, the enemy of man, whose emissaries are perseveringly active in assailing not only the spirits but the bodies of men, and spreading disease and corruption throughout their whole nature. There is nothing incomprehensible here; rather human life becomes incomprehensible, and the light of the world obscure, for him who will not acknowledge the reality of a conflict between the powers of light and of darkness. Can these utterances of the Word be figures only that must be explained away? The whole passage from which our New Testament text is taken is emptied of meaning, if there be no personal Satan, no personal demons, whose business it is to suggest sin and to harden the heart against virtue. If you rid you, Jesus says, of an unclean spirit, you must at once put into his place a strong man armed

to keep the heart against him ; that is, you must put there the spirit of Christ. Otherwise the unclean spirit again enters and brings worse spirits with him.

I believe I know what this means, and all who hear me know. If the kingdom of heaven can be within a man, may not the kingdom of hell be there? If the spirit of Christ can be within the heart, may not the spirit of Satan be there?

I should be well content if I could, and if all here could, realise vigorously this teaching that the soul must be occupied, possessed, and controlled either by good or by evil powers. It cannot be empty. If it be possessed by Satan and his army, the man is unclean, passionate, deceitful, proud, malicious, selfish, lazy, gluttonous : if by Christ and his legions, he is pure in heart, righteous, meek, honest, merciful, charitable, strenuous, self-controlled. He is strong and armed who derives his security from Christ and wears the armour of God.

But for the most part, or rather always,

the city of the heart is neither wholly walled, nor wholly open to aggression ; the man who keeps his palace is neither unarmed, nor yet to be rightly called a strong man armed. There is fighting in the streets and lanes of the city, or in the courts and chambers of the palace. At all events, that is my own experience, and no doubt is yours also.

Now, if it be the case that the heart cannot but be the scene of a conflict between the powers of good and the powers of evil, between angels and demons, is it the case also that each man must fight alone ? or may he draw upon other hearts for reinforcements for the one side or the other ? It is certain that he may find succour from his neighbours. A man's spirit may be helped not only by Christ, but by other hearts too in the building of its walls, in the seating on its throne of the strong man armed. Otherwise there would be no virtue in the common life of school, and I should but waste time in speaking from this place, and you in hearing. It is true that such a common life may reinforce the demons

no less than it reinforces the angels. There have been times at Westminster, as there have been times at every public school, when the common spirit instead of aiding the single soul to fortify itself against sin has actually hindered it, and when the strong man armed has had to resist Satan's crew in isolation without sympathetic fellowship. I know schools now in which the common spirit is on the side of the demons, where pureness of heart must be strongly fortified, if it is to be retained at all. For all I can tell there may be elements in the common spirit operative here now which tend rather to reinforce the devil in his siege of single hearts—you can say more certainly than I can—but I hope that on the whole the sympathies of the school are with him who seeks the help of Christ's spirit to build his walls, and would fain seat in the palace of his heart a strong man armed. That at least must be the ideal for all schools that are to be of any spiritual service to those who attend them. Devoid of this ideal, a school is merely a collection of

class-rooms in which the knowledge of certain facts or fancies in language, in literature, or in the sciences is more or less effectually conveyed. It is a place of instruction, not a place of education. I should be sorry to say a word which could tempt any boy to conceive that knowledge of facts and of principles is not a priceless treasure. It is a treasure which only the foolish and the thoughtless and the indolent do not seek. But better than knowledge is the motive from which knowledge is sought. It is the presence of this motive which transforms a school from a place of instruction into a place of education. The knowledge of facts and of principles that boys can acquire is almost worthless compared with the precious things they may make their own by means of the ideals which lead them on to acquire knowledge. I have known many who, without any considerable gifts or aptitudes, have nevertheless at school equipped themselves well for the spiritual struggles of manhood by acquiring, in the only way in which it can be acquired, the power to con-

quer the devil and his legions. The boy who does that not only rules his own spirit ; he helps others to rule theirs. By expelling from his own palace the demon of indolence he has strengthened and armed others against the same enemy. I have known many who have conquered worse demons than indolence, ousting them from their own palace, reinforcing others against them ; making, for example, pureness of heart, or self-denial, or truthfulness, more easy of attainment for everybody here.

Something like this, I take it, is education, a word on many lips, and therefore difficult of apprehension—an arming of the spirit, a reinforcement of nature, a fencing of the man as with walls. No school which follows after this can fail in attaining to the love of knowledge, forasmuch as the whole includes the part.

SERMON XII

EXPECTATIONS

The Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.—ACTS xii 11.

IT was Herod's purpose to keep Peter in prison for a time and then to sacrifice him to the Jews, and the Jews in turn counted securely upon Peter's execution. Both had reason for believing that he could not escape their vengeance. Nevertheless, they were disappointed. Their expectation was not fulfilled. They had formed it without reckoning upon God's intervention. It may well be that the prisoner himself did not think his case so desperate. Peter had seen too many examples of supernatural interference in the affairs of men to imagine that any expectation either of good or of ill could be other than

precarious. The belief that God, not man, shapes and controls events must have grown into a powerful and abiding force in the minds of all who had gone in and out with Jesus, had seen their hopes once wholly extinguished by his death, and again rekindled and assured by his resurrection. Their whole attitude towards the circumstances and incidents of life cannot but have been modified thereby. If the other disciples had this conviction, Peter must have held it more intensely. Not only did he belong to the group of three whom Jesus adopted into the most intimate fellowship with himself, but of the three he would appear to have been the principal. He had been present when Jairus' daughter awoke, when the widow's son was restored to her, when Lazarus was recalled. Jesus had once reached out his hand and saved him when he began to sink in the sea. Men do not forget such things; and Peter guarded closely in prison cannot have forgotten that he had been in a worse plight before, and had been rescued by Jesus himself.

Everybody has his hopes and expectations. There are some here to-day who cherish the definite expectation that in a month's time their career at school will be crowned with some substantial kind of success. I wonder if they cherish this expectation in the spirit of Herod and of the Jews as a thing in which God has no hand, a thing on which they can confidently count; or in the Christian spirit as something which God controls, and may even entirely frustrate. It is not that God intervenes now in the manner in which he intervened between Peter and the Jews; but he does intervene as directly and really, though the manner be changed. Gates do not open or bars fall; there is nothing that might be called miraculous in the way in which expectations are fulfilled, or modified, or destroyed. Nevertheless, God still disappoints or alters them or fulfils them. There was once a rich man who made quite sure of riches and happiness; but God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose

shall those things be which thou hast provided ?”

In God's sight a man is a fool who makes certain of anything. The thread of expectation is thin, and easily snaps. The imitator of Jesus Christ tries to entrust himself and all his expectations to God's discretion. The sting is then withdrawn from disappointment. Failure does not surprise or sour. The man who acknowledges that God's will has an influence upon the things which happen to him takes any changes, any disappointments, any successes, as part of a train of events which must have a good result somewhere and somehow. He takes his life as it comes for a creating and schooling of character. When he forms plans and entertains hopes, he does not conceal from himself that from their very nature these plans and hopes are ill secured. They are not of the same real and solid substance as the rock on which his spiritual life is founded. If they be swept away, he may let them go, and be none the worse for the loss ; rather, may be even the

better, because he has learned one lesson of wisdom the more.

The wisdom of sitting loose to expectation, and of seeing the finger of God in failure as in success, is a good deal more difficult to put in practice than to acknowledge with the reason. It can be acquired in only one way, by the letting the spirit of God mould and school the will to accept what comes as the gift of God; taking it with resignation and even with cheerfulness if it be what men call evil, and with humility and mistrust when it is what men call good.

Not to learn a little of this wisdom is a man's own fault. Who cannot recall some disappointment which he can now see was a blessing, or some success which became, or almost became, an irresistible temptation? The character is all the richer for such experience; the will is all the stronger.

If this has happened, if the mind is not so desperately set upon realising ambitions or expectations precisely as they are first framed, if the reason acknowledges that the

shock of failure may be of more value than any complete success, then the heart may well have begun to submit to the spirit of Christ.

God does intervene in the lives of men. Jesus Christ claimed for the Father this authority when he bade men pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The Son of God lived here as the Son of man in order that men, by his example, might be taught to detach themselves from earthly hopes and earthly ambitions, and might accept God's will as their supreme good. Christ is for man not only a brother but a master, the Lord Christ; God is for man not only a Father but a king. Man is a subject who should have one will with his master and with his king; but he is also a son who may accept his Father's authority in a spirit of love and confidence, knowing that the brother, who is his master, has done the same.

These things are uncommonly difficult to put in words that the mind can grip and

keep. It is thought to be a preacher's business to say them, and a hearer's part to bear with him. They have been often said, often heard, often forgotten already. They are the cry and burden of the prophets. They are nearly as old as the hills. As the generations pass, each hears them afresh, and a remnant in each gives heed when the Word says that failure and disappointment, suffering and tears, endured without repining for righteousness' sake, are the means whereby a man's spirit is made strong and tranquil, and is prepared for God's service and united with Christ and made worthy of God's glory. I do not find that Jesus ever pronounced a beatitude upon worldly success of any kind; but he pronounces many upon things that the world connects only with failure and disappointment. Nevertheless, it is certain that the blessing is not promised to failure and suffering in themselves, but only as they are borne for Christ's sake. The man who lets the world know his heart's secrets, his tribulations, agonies, despairs, conflicts, dis-

appointments, failures, is not blessed but contemptible. He can only be blessed, if he never tells. No one, Jesus says again and again, has any right to hear the soul's crying but the Father who seeth in secret; for no other can give spiritual help and comfort.

In thy most mortal combats with the unclean spirit of self-love or the devil of despair, yet wear a cheerful face, that thou appear not unto men to fight at all, content that thy master knows thy weakness, and will reinforce thee before thou fail.

SERMON XIII

IMPEDIMENTS TO PROGRESS AND IMPEDERS OF PROGRESS

It must needs be that offences come : but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.—MATTHEW xviii 7.

IT is said by Scaliger, who was perhaps the most sagacious interpreter of antiquity, that if men could only recover the proverbial lore and the various turns of speech and habits of thought common in Syria in the time of Jesus, they would find some of the hard sayings of Jesus to be as simple as they doubtless appeared to the simple folk who heard them first. This, I conceive, is such a saying, or rather part of such a saying, and I shall try and restore to it some of its simplicity and directness.

There is an oriental fashion of speaking concerning the way in which men act or suffer that is so unfamiliar to western races that even the Bible, whereby so many oriental

ideas have been introduced into Europe, has not made this conception, or the phrases that express it, familiar in any real sense to the ordinary European. It is true indeed that the Jewish phrases are in their English sounds well known to the ear—transgression and trespasses, to walk in the law of the Lord, the way of righteousness, the path of God's commandments, to be out of the way, and the like—but who is not conscious, when he hears, or perhaps himself employs, these expressions that they convey less intimate meaning to him than would be conveyed by genuine English phrases? The metaphor is not an English metaphor at all. It is borrowed from an alien race, and expresses an alien form of thought. To this group of oriental phrases the words offend and offence belong. A man travelling on a road finds some obstruction, or his foot strikes a stone so that he stumbles, or is even so much hurt that he cannot proceed for a time, or perhaps may never walk sturdily again. The bar across the road,

the obstacle of any kind which stops or maims the traveller is an offence, a stumbling-block, a rock of offence, a fall.

In the gospel for this day Jesus says to his disciples, that even when men have been converted, that is, have turned about and taken the right road instead of the wrong, there are nevertheless many obstacles to be surmounted, many a stone to stumble against, many a spot of slippery ground. These bars, and stops, and sundry impediments may be placed, he says, in the way by others; or they may even be in some measure of the travellers' own seeking. For the travellers on this road are men's souls, and the bars, and stops, and impediments are just as likely to arise from the bodies in which the travelling souls dwell as from other souls or other bodies. The enemy of men's souls is active and enterprising.

Jesus does not in this place mention Satan by name, but he does mention the realm of Satan as the ultimate source of all these obstructions to the progress of the soul.

“A curse rests upon the world (*i.e.*, upon the kingdom of Satan) by reason of the impediments placed thereby in the soul’s path. Such impediments are inevitable in this age, but alas for the man who is responsible for this impediment or for that. The curse may even fall on thee thyself: the bar to thy soul’s journey may be placed athwart thy path by thine own body, thine hand or thy foot or thine eye, by any member of them all. Bring forward on this journey any humble, child-like soul, and thou servest me; but if instead thou be tempted to put impediments in that soul’s way, better first destroy thine own natural life than bar another’s access unto God. As for thyself, be it limb of thine own body which obstructs thy soul’s progress, rather deprive that limb of its proper office than let it by perversion of that office drag thy soul into Satan’s power for ever.”

Such is Jesus’ answer to his disciples’ question, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” St. Matthew does not record what St. Mark records, that a little

before they put the question they had disputed which of them should receive from their master the highest position in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus took a child, and placing him among them, answered their question thus, saying that they could not enter the kingdom of heaven at all unless they were first rid of the spirit which had prompted such a debate, and were become as humble and simple as the child whom he had placed with them as more worthy of the kingdom of heaven than they. Their quarrel proved that they did not belong to the kingdom of heaven, but to the world or kingdom of Satan, and that instead of helping one another to travel on the right road, they hindered one another. The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, which they thought to import into the kingdom of God, were in Satan's gift and not in Christ's. The woes of Christ rested upon them. Christ's blessing was to be obtained only by such as could so reverse the world's judgment as to see true greatness in humility or self-depre-

ciation, and true dignity in service or self-denial. The angels thought not of primacy or preëminence, but only how to obey God and serve such souls of men as were humble enough to seek God's help, and accept the angels' succour, and resolute enough to surrender even God's gifts of body, if they found that these gave advantage to Satan, and provided impediments to their spiritual progress; nay, to sacrifice even bodily life itself rather than place obstacles in the path of any soul.

It is impossible to dwell upon this saying of Jesus without shame and self-contempt. Nobody but must be aware that he is often proud, often stands upon his dignity, often takes the world's view, the satanic view, of greatness, arguing that to do things which would be of spiritual service to others cannot consist with his self-respect. Who does not know of things done every day, or of ideas prevailing here in school, that are on any interpretation contrary to this judgment of Jesus Christ, and nevertheless are defended and cherished by some who in many ways

try to put in practice Christian ideals? Yet no disciple can say that the teaching of the Master is not perfectly plain and direct. Anyone can imagine himself standing there with Peter, James, and John, and the rest, and seeing the little child set among them, and hearing Jesus say, as the child stood abasht with these grown men still excited by their quarrel, "Before a man can be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he must think as little of worldly rank and greatness as this little child. He will so far partake in my spirit and be mine." Then follows the warning that none shall unpunished put obstructions in the way of such child-like souls, or let his flesh put obstructions in his own soul's way, if thus child-like it would become. It is as though Jesus had said to each: "In taking part in this controversy, suggested by Satan himself, how can you tell that you have not put an impediment in the way of some other of my disciples, as you have certainly let the lower side of your own nature impede the higher?"

I mean to leave this exposition of to-day's gospel without particularising how its teaching ought to affect the attitude and conduct of us masters and you boys at school. Everybody can make sure for himself whether he tries or does not try to let this gospel direct his conduct. It contains, as I have said already, plain teaching, direct teaching, and withal teaching that is at first unwelcome and even repellent to most men. It can only become acceptable and fruitful when a man really endeavours to attain to some share in the spirit of Christ. Like all Christ's teaching it is better unglossed. It may be the case, it often is the case, that the words of Jesus spoken immediately to Syrians in the Syrian language have to be rendered into the speech of another people in another age; but apart from this they need no gloss, and are best let enter the soul as the Word spoke them.

SERMON XIV

VIGILANCE

Watch thou in all things.—2 TIMOTHY iv 5.

THIS is almost certainly one of the many allusions in the Epistles to sayings of Jesus, whether recorded or not in the Gospels. The word translated 'watch' is *νήφε*, 'be sober,' and rendering it as they do, the translators no doubt correctly suggest a reminiscence of the parable in which is contrasted the conduct of two servants set by their master over other servants. The one is represented as faithful to his trust, doing his master's bidding vigilantly, the other as betraying his charge, saying to himself, My master is long in coming back, and beginning to maltreat the other servants, and as spending his time in idleness and drinking. If further evidence be needed that this view is just, namely, that

in writing this part of this letter to Timothy, Paul had the parable in mind, such evidence is found in two other forms of phrase here used. The one is, Make full proof of thy ministry, or better, Make good thy service; the other is, And not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing. These taken together with the, Be sober, make up the whole framework of the parable.

Paul has watched for his Master's return and knows that now he must soon come to commend and to reward him, just as in the parable the faithful, vigilant servant was commended and rewarded. He bids Timothy take example by him, and by sober, watchful service earn the like reward and praise when the Master appears to him in his turn. He must give the other servants their meat in due season, or in other words, do the work of an evangelist. He must live for others and not for himself. He must not spend his days like the ill servant, as though he had no duties to the others, but had been given his place for his own gratification. He must display a

self-denying and loyal vigilance and be always ready for his Master's coming.

St. Paul, like the other Christians of that time, had at first misunderstood what Jesus had meant by the Coming of the Son of man. He had imagined that Jesus Christ was to return to earth within a few years from his resurrection in order to judge the whole world at once. It was only by degrees that he came to see that the final coming of Christ to judge all mankind is of no great concern to the individual disciple. The death of each man is the Coming, the appearing, the return of the Master. In this passage St. Paul has attained to the true interpretation of the parable in which Jesus had conveyed to men the dignity and impressiveness of the two chief gifts of God to man, the gift of life and the gift of death. Perhaps the richness of both has never been more finely suggested.

I should be uncommonly sorry, I can tell you, ever to say anything to anybody, more particularly, if he were young, calculated to frighten him about death. I do not believe

any one was ever made a Christian by fright. Fright has nothing to do with faith. Fright has very different motives. When our Lord in the parable describes the judgment upon the ill servant, he simply states what must be the consequence of misusing life. He does not even hint that faith can be created by the terror of judgment. It is the man who says that he has faith and accepts the Master's work, promising to do it but soon betraying his trust, that is appointed his portion with the untrue, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus could not conceal the truth that for each the character of his destiny at death is determined by the character of his life before death; but the one point which concerns you and me now is, that if a man believes what Jesus Christ says, then he believes that when he dies Jesus Christ does appear to him and judge him.

In speaking of vigilance I speak of course only to those who profess faith, and therefore profess also to be servants of Jesus Christ.

Vigilance, as St. Paul here clearly implies,

involves fighting and suffering and perseverance, but is at the same time made easier by the example of others.

First, a man must fight himself, the grosser side of himself, which loves food and drink and the perverse gratification of all the bodily senses. If he makes much of these things they soon choke his faith. He begins to say, Why watch day after day, hour after hour, for a master who may not come for many long years? Time enough to prepare to answer the door when I hear his step approaching. That is not vigilant service.

Next a man must fight the world, that is, the bad example set him by other men who are either hypocritical servants or not servants at all. These give their opinion of life fine names, worldly wisdom, common sense, knowledge of life, and the like, and even the best servants are often misled into the same way of reading and glossing human duty and responsibility. Everybody knows how difficult it sometimes is to contend against so natural and so alluring a view of his relations

with other men as is presented by the phrase worldly wisdom. Things are said and done before me, of which, if I were alone, I should feel ashamed, yet in company for good fellowship I condone them or take part in them. That is not vigilant service.

Nor can the watchful servant get through even one day of his life without rubs and troubles, and perhaps hard usage. There is no fighting without sweat and hardship and the risk of wounds. St. Paul has a good name for the scars got in this cause. He calls them the marks of Christ Jesus, signs that he is a servant whom Jesus Christ has made his own by fair purchase. He who has no such scars cannot be a vigilant servant.

Further, the good servant does not get weary of serving. His vigilance is maintained, however long his master may delay his coming. Indeed, it should become all the easier by practice—and I think everyone who has tried it will say that it does become easier. Partly it is made easier also

by the example of others. Nevertheless, the ideal of good service ought always to be enlarging, and to make fresh demands upon the good servant's vigilance. That which satisfied him once ought no longer to satisfy him. Having discovered something of the peace and tranquil patience with which God rewards the honest, simple, unassuming, willing attempt to put faith in practice, he is stimulated to fight better, to take hard knocks with more endurance, to persevere more resolutely in vigilance, to seek more eagerly inspiration from other servants of the same master. That in effect is what Paul here encourages Timothy to do. Waiting tranquilly for Jesus Christ to appear, conscious that he will welcome his appearing, Paul turns his own career into a spur and a force to push Timothy forward on the road which he has himself travelled almost to its end. "I have fought," he says, "with honour, I have run the race out and fainted not" (this by the way is St. Paul's favourite figure for doing the work of an evangelist, or—shall I

say?—for giving his fellow servants their meat in due season), “I have kept my faith unstained, and I wait quietly for the Lord and for the sense of perfect sinlessness which my Master will assign me as the wage of faithful, vigilant service.” “May thou, my son, be encouraged by my example and by my reward to fight against thyself and against the world, to endure hard usage, to labour for others, to make good thy service of Jesus Christ, like the faithful steward who waited so truly and vigilantly for the master’s voice.”

One word before I have done to such as may never have tried to be the Master’s servants at all. I need do nothing more than ask them to recollect who it was who drew this picture of the vigilant servant. The man who wrote in this way of the ideal life for man was the Saul who did all he could to crush the faith at its first beginning. If he could in the end make so sure that he had himself realised this ideal, why should not you or I be able some day to speak in like tones? In saying this I do not say that we

are any better to begin with than St. Paul. I only say that there is some reason for hopefulness. I may not have consented to a martyr's death, but I may have done what is for me as bad a thing—I may have helped to make a martyr. If I have not tried to crush the faith I have done much to weaken it, and little to increase it. Nevertheless, it is in my power, it is much more in your power, yet to secure by means of some space of vigilant service the right to say with St. Paul, "I have fought with honour, I have made good the trust reposed in me."

SERMON XV

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND THE COMMON LIFE

These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—
JOHN xvi 33.

ON the first Christmas the call of the angels announcing to the shepherds the birth of Jesus was "Peace, goodwill towards men"; and at the end of his days on earth, when his works and his teaching appeared to the world to be fruitless and nigh extinction, Jesus himself declares that he has indeed secured peace for the heart of man. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Nevertheless, during his life he repeatedly affirmed that this message of peace was at the same time a challenge to war. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came

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not to send peace, but a sword." "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division." "I am come to kindle fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled?"

Both things are true. The laws of men's logic are suspended when Christ speaks. There is, and must be, this downright contradiction in the mode of estimating spiritual facts so long as men are left upon the earth for devils to pervert and torment, or for the spirit of God to save. The way in which a man regards and names certain things depends entirely upon his general attitude towards these two forces, the subtleties of Satan and the strength of God. There can be no truce between these natural enemies. "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." "From henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three." "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left." "He that is not with me is against

me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." "How can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his goods."

The meaning of all this is that the gospel announced by Jesus Christ has furnished a new measure for things. It has made possible for anybody and everybody an entire revolution in his natural ideas and common estimates. It glorifies human weakness and poverty and humbleness, because it explains how such things may be transmuted more easily than their opposites into power with God. It demonstrates that from a spiritual standpoint the poet's guess is true, that death may be life, and life death. In a word, it turns men's notions upside down, and reverses men's verdicts; and among other like things it declares a state of spiritual battle to be not only compatible with perfect spiritual peace but even to be essential to its existence. Take up any one of the gospels and read it through at a sitting; it will leave upon the

mind in a strong and vivid impression the consistency of a life of hardship and suffering with the most serene spiritual tranquillity. It will prove indeed that life is a field of battle, but it will furnish at the same time an armament so strong and reliable that there can be no cause for doubting the issue of the combat. The Captain is at once a messenger of peace and the declarer of war. In his life among men he held out in the one hand peace, and with the other he wielded every weapon of indignation and scorn and irony against the cruel spiritual host of pride and self-will and hypocrisy. Imitating Jesus, copying the spirit of Christ, men must be at once men of peace and good fighters. In spiritual conflicts the peacemaker is a formidable antagonist. The poor in spirit will never let the powers of the air domineer over him. The meek are very lions in fighting Abaddon. Travellers on the way of peace not only may, but must be armed, though never was armour called by such contradictory names. The corselet is the corselet of righteousness or

peace with God's law ; the helmet is the helmet of spiritual security or peace with God ; the shield is the shield of faith or confidence in Christ ; and the feet are shod with the gospel of peace. The one weapon of offence is the sword of the Spirit ; but the Spirit is also named the Comforter, and the mark on the blade is a dove.

Thus armed and travelling forward in reliance upon God, or since the Son of God himself became also the Son of man, it is no sin to say, in sympathy with God, a man may travel all the length of the narrow way, and never find it other than the way of peace. The strength with which he clambers up it is God's strength. The dawning light from heaven has once for all shone out to guide man's steps in the way of peace.

This way of peace is to the world neither broad nor easy, or certainly it would never run through the kingdom of God, but would be a thoroughfare in the spiritual land of which Satan is king. All the great features of the kingdom of God bear these contra-

dictory names, according as they are spoken of by the people of the land or by their enemies on the other side of the border. And this is no exception. It is the way of peace to those who know it. To all who are not on it, it is the narrow way, the way called Tribulation, and it is approached by a strait wicket under a low and uninviting pend.

But if the gospel of Jesus Christ thus brings out the contradictions of life, it reconciles them too. When men first try to copy consciously the life of Jesus by the help of the spirit of Christ, their life no doubt becomes a battlefield; but at the same time in the same degree they become more at peace with themselves and their own purest aspirations, because in making of it a battlefield at all they have at least begun to be at peace with God. There is that in every man which comes straight from heaven, charged with God's strength and love and serenity, if the man will only recognise its presence there. Life's unrest slowly and gradually—how very slowly most men know—may change into rest. The

way of tribulation may become the way of peace. The shadow that always rests upon the easy way, the shadow of death, all who make their footing good upon the way of suffering are quit of once for all. That in itself should make it reasonable to call this way the way of peace ; but there are good reasons besides.

God is not only life, but God is love ; and his presence in the heart enriches all the relations of man with men. If the hope of eternal life must be present to everyone who partakes worthily of the Lord's table, the thought of love to others and of reconciliation with unfriends and forgiveness of injurers must be present too, charged with Christian fellowship and spiritual sympathy. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Without sympathy no man can have much tribulation, or much peace. With spiritual sympathy for others a man can be

neither Pharisee nor fanatic ; but he may be, and to some extent must be, a sustainer of the cause of God, and therefore have some share in peace.

We read the first three gospels through every year in Abbey. Some of us have listened to them, or at least heard them, for a good many years now. Some, perhaps, have never thought at all about this contradiction, though it is assumed on every page, that to lose life is to save it, that to undergo suffering is to find peace, that the hatred of the world is the love of God ; or, if they have sometimes thought about it, they may never have tried to work it into their lives. They may even have armed themselves against it, and deliberately rejected it as the Pharisees, or deliberately ignored it, as did many of the publicans and the harlots when they heard it from the lips of Jesus. Nevertheless, the teaching of Jesus as to this inevitable contradiction is the one essential thing, without which no education of the mind, no disciplining of temper, is of much consequence. The Phari-

sees among us will continue to reject it; some of the publicans and harlots among us may have already begun to take it to heart. But it cannot be from ignorance, if we go on thinking and speaking of the way of peace as the way of tribulation. We read the other day what Jesus said to such as deliberately refused to hear: "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you," and to day we read his words addressed to those who had recognised this contradiction, and chosen his side rather than the world's—"These things have I spoken unto you that ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

SERMON XVI

THE GOVERNMENT OF SPEECH

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.—MATTHEW xii 34 ff.

ST. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome speaks of men who, possessing no direct revelation, had nevertheless by faithful obedience to the promptings of conscience and by the legitimate use of reason and of the gift of language attained to a controlling knowledge of God's will, "their conscience attesting that they act rightly or wrongly, and the conclusions of reason arrived at by controversy either arraigning or absolving them." It is one step in a grave argument whereby he demonstrates that the bulk of the Jews, from misinterpreting the spirit and purpose of the

law, and the bulk of the rest of mankind from ignoring the verdicts of conscience and of reason concerning the requirements of God, had merited the wrath of God and made necessary the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is clear from this passage that St. Paul understood, in as liberal and comprehensive a sense as has ever been claimed for them by philosophy, the significance to humanity of the three gifts which difference man from the other creatures of God—the gifts of conscience, reason, and speech. Together they make up a natural revelation, sufficient, in default at least of a better, to expound the way in which a man should use the greatest gift of all, the gift of life. In speaking as he does, St. Paul, it is plain, had principally in mind the lasting achievements of the Greek race in literature, in science, in philosophy. He recognised the reality of these achievements, and their value to the world; nevertheless, at the same time the context leaves no doubt that he recognised also the hideously perverse use to which the Greeks had often

put their singular endowments of reason and of speech. The good among them out of the good treasure of their heart had brought forth good things, and the evil out of their evil treasure had brought forth evil things. The best of their good has in literature never been surpassed hitherto, and may never be surpassed at all; in philosophy and in science the richest and most far-reaching conclusions that have ever been attained by controversy must also be conceded to the Greeks.

It is impossible to say whether St. Paul anticipated that in literature, science, and philosophy, the triumph of reason would be augmented by the new revelation which he gave up his life to make known. It is certain, however, that they have not been so augmented. Why is it that in this respect the ages since Christ compare but ill with the ages before Christ, although men have been free to draw not only upon the experience and the examples of the ancients, but also upon the ideals of the gospel? It is a

puzzling and intricate question, nor can I do more than hint at part of the answer.

A great scholar living just at the time when the printing press reached considerable mechanical efficiency, and began to send out books by the score, has recorded that even within his own observation it had been detrimental to learning, and to that order of knowledge which cannot be acquired except by laborious thought and patient investigation. The printing press preserved the idle word and reproduced it for the perversion and corruption of more men. There is of course truth in this contention. It is certain that the printing press has done something to deteriorate reason, and even to degrade speech, the expression of reason. He who has within him an evil treasure, possesses in the printing press an engine for scattering broadcast among men the evil things issuing therefrom. On the other hand, by the same means to the like degree, the area ought to be enlarged within which good things may become known and be enjoyed. The fault

therefore lies with man himself, and not with man's invented instrument, the press, if he prefer the evil things to the good, or if from indolence he let the glosses of other men keep him from tackling for himself serious thoughts conveyed in plain-dealing language, or accept the conclusions of another man's reason rather than exert his own reason. I have once or twice had to look through all the books that have been published upon one subject during several centuries, and I have found very few in the whole number to contain aught save what has been borrowed from an earlier book. They are for the most part idle words. Their makers have been idle, unpossessed with love for truth, neglectful of the good treasure, if good treasure they have had. To this extent Scaliger is right, that the printing press does embarrass the searcher after truth, obscuring the important by the trivial, distracting the mind of the honest by the accumulations of the dishonest, tempting men to discard strenuous thought, and to speak before they know.

This does not concern grown men only; it concerns boys at school. When I talk with them of the books they read in form, great classics, those, or such as those, to which St. Paul refers as containing the conclusions of reason, I discover often that they do not know the writer's name, but confound it with that of the person who has glossed a chapter or two for use in school. Even the title of the great book they sometimes do not know. 'Tis buried under the idle word, which projecting to help the mind diverts it from things essential. Busby had reason when he would have his boys read the plain Latin or Greek without glosses. If all had been of Busby's mind, the printing press might have worked less mischief; the brain of the race might have been more virile. If I see a boy always eager to find some sort of help rather than willing to tax his own brain to discover the meaning of what he reads, I do not expect him to say much that implies thoughtfulness when we talk together. There is risk that he will himself grow up to be a

speaker of idle words, a reader of magazines and of evening newspapers and of novels, a repeater of the latest trick of speech, a believer in the last crazy poet, a stickler for the newest fashion in handshaking or the latest cut of a coat. When I meet him after he has left school, I feel that he is a rebuke to Westminster. For these things are all, in one way or another, expressions of a man's character, idle words, evil things. It is inconceivable that they could do anybody any good. They are unrealities, and anyone who lives in them, or even makes much of them, is a speaker of idle words.

Let us go further together, searching heart rather than head. There are idle words worse than these, such as St. Paul indicates on the same page as that in which he speaks of the Greek efforts to reinforce conscience by reason, downright evil things brought forth out of the evil abundance within. Instead of saying plain 'yes' or plain 'no,' 'it is so,' 'it is not the case,' or some other simple, straightforward phrase of assent or denial, a man

swears or protests in some foolish way, thereby weakening, not affirming, what he says. All these unnecessary enlargements show that he who uses them is aware that his simple word is not valuable. He distrusts his own honour. Jesus Christ's teaching in respect to this there can be no mistaking. Eliciting the spirit of the third commandment he declares, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea : Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of the evil one." He would abolish even the solemn oath of the Old Testament, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand." No man who respects himself, certainly no obedient copyer of Jesus Christ, will consent to confirm his 'yes' or 'no,' unless when the law, which knows him not, demands it.

Let us go deeper still. There are idle words more worthy of condemnation than the needlessly emphatic—those, namely, which do not only betray their speaker's disbelief in his own manhood and truth, but demonstrate his disbelief in another's manhood and good-

ness. In this case too, as in all the rest, the idle word, the evil thing, may be written down, remember, as well as spoken. It is not my duty to rake up this ugly heap here, but it is my duty to bring the minds of any present who perhaps bring out such evil things from the evil store within them into the presence of Him, who shall be their judge, as he says to them here and now that every idle word that they may speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; and to say also to those who may not themselves speak them, yet do not resent them when spoken in their presence, Speak out; speak out, and rebuke them. They are the lie direct given to your own manhood. They would not be uttered before you if he who speaks them believed in your pureness of heart. The evil spirit that possesses the speaker of these evil things jeers at you, and hopes to possess you also. Nor is he far from success if you listen. Give him back as good as he gave, and defeat him.

That which differences man from every

other living thing may bring man down lower than them all. Satan loves the best gifts, that he may twist them into deformity. If he be once permitted to work his will upon them, he makes of them his most revolting and destructive engines. Jesus has told men so, and Jesus Christ knows what is in men, and Jesus the Son of God, shall judge men's secrets in the day of judgment.

Everybody is thinking now of war, and of his fellows who maintain his cause with the strength and majesty of hardy spirits in faltering bodies, and perhaps himself is eager to face death as their comrade; but there is another field, on which to fight with strength and majesty requires more manhood. There the evil in a man's nature is embattled against the good. The fighting lasts not for an hour or for a day or for a year, but for a lifetime. Either side can call up reinforcements at any moment at its pleasure. Men are not so eager to take part in this conflict; nevertheless, all must share in it. He is on the side of evil who makes no choice between the

sides. He may also be there by frank and open choice ; but no one here, I am sure, has taken that side deliberately. Yet many perhaps are on it, because they have not thought at all which side they must be on if there be manhood in them, and respect for goodness—the side on which good men fight against evil and its backers ; on which those fight who draw their reinforcements to make good the waste of war not from the doomed and reckless power of hell, but from the calm, unexhausted resources of heaven.

There is a mark by which fighters in this war distinguish friends from enemies, the mark named in these words of Christ, the nature of the things which they bring forth from the treasure of their hearts, the mark of evil, the idle word, visibly worn by such as fight for the kingdom of Satan ; or the mark of good, the badge of truth and sincerity, discoverable upon those who know that their manhood shall be judged justly at the last.

SERMON XVII

THE INEVITABLENESS OF WAR

Blessed are the peacemakers.—MATTHEW v 9.

What king, going to war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?—LUKE xiv 31.

THERE might be found in the Old Testament many sentences bearing more directly upon the subject of which I wish to speak than these two texts from the New ; but from the Old Testament it may well be that unchristian conclusions would have been drawn. So many accepted opinions and approved judgments were reversed by the authority of Jesus Christ that even the Old Testament is sometimes a blind guide in matters of conduct.

War, at least on one side, is so brutal, inhuman, and devilish that he who would justify it in a church must indeed be careful to seek direction from the teaching of Jesus

Christ. I believe that it is possible to show that there are elements in that teaching from which it may be deduced that wars are not likely to cease so long as men continue to be born and beget children and die. Until Christ has finally triumphed over Satan, the sword shall always be, as the sword has always been, the last instrument of arbitrament between nations.

It does not admit of doubt that Jesus never contemplates universal acceptance for his teaching. It would even be difficult to demonstrate that he ever looked for more than a certain number of disciples in any generation among any people; or that he reckoned upon such increase in the number of his followers as should produce at any time overwhelming superiority for the kingdom of heaven over the despotism of hell. It is instructive to observe how, in parable after parable, Jesus withholds any precise indication of the numbers on the one hand of those who accept his spirit, on the other of those who reject it. Either no proportion

is named at all, or the proportion differs greatly in different parables. Who shall tell how many worthless fish the draw-net takes with the good, how the tares stand to the wheat, how much of the sower's seed is lost, how much germinates and dies, how much springs up and yields increase; or again, how many refuse the invitation to the supper, how many come from the hedges and highways? Who shall say how many find the hid treasure or seek the pearl of price, how many will act as the publican or how many as the Pharisee, how many the sheep will be and how many the goats? True, of the ten virgins five are wise and five are foolish, but in the parable of the talents the proportion is two to one, in that of the pounds it is nine to one, in another it is ninety-nine to one. Not only is there this persistent variation or persistent uncertainty, the men spoken of in these parables are such as have actually heard Christ's call. Nothing is implied concerning the millions who at any time have not heard the call at all. Further,

when the larger number in the proportion refers, as it does in the parables that have been mentioned, invariably to the saved, it has still to be corrected by another plain saying: "Many are called, but few chosen." It is the larger—who can doubt?—in order that men may not despond too soon. The one thing on which Jesus Christ supremely insists is the need for his teaching to take root in the single heart. The few chosen may become, nay, shall become, a vast army, but the recruits come in one by one. Nor can any recruit tell for certain who fight at his side. He cannot himself be quite sure what the king will say to him at last; much less can he conjecture the judgment that others will receive. He can hope; he cannot know. Hope, as St. Paul saw, is essential for him who fights in this war. The Christian does not realise here; he only hopes; and he who bids him fight is careful not to quench this hope.

If I have rightly interpreted this side of Christ's teaching, the conclusion is inevitable,

that in any body of men in the church, much more in the nation, there are always many who are not Christians, however deeply, however widely Christian conceptions and moral ideals generated therefrom may influence and in some degree elevate the whole body, Christian and unchristian, be it church, or nation, or aggregate of nations; and if this is the case, then at any time a condition of things may arise so perverse and satanic that nothing but war, revolting and satanic as war itself in one aspect always is, can determine it. Jesus Christ certainly said: "Blessed are the peacemakers," but he also said: "These be the days of vengeance; there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations." And he said also: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round,

and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." There could not be plainer evidence that war is the scourge with which God chastens men. Before war can become this scourge, men must levy war. Before a nation be thus chastened, another nation must act as God's instrument.

Men have to reconcile, as they best can, these seemingly contradictory sayings of Jesus Christ; and in this instance, the blessing upon the peacemaker and the recognition of war as an instrument of divine justice can, I believe, be reconciled in the way I have tried to show. The blessing upon the peacemaker is a blessing upon the individual and for the remnant that is Christian within any nation; but it cannot and does not mean that the Christian, either singly or as one in a community, shall not take part in the degrading and the ennobling business of war.

When Jesus Christ said, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword," as Peter would have rashly defended him against the civil power, he said but what any wise man would have said. He did not say that in all circumstances fighting is wrong. Had he meant that, the saying would have taken another form. As it stands, it can signify only this—that armed resistance to the will of the community must be visited by the community with death. Instead of furnishing an argument against the view that I have tried to present, it is an argument in its favour. For man to take man's life is an appalling thing; nevertheless, communities could not exist as associations of men ordered under law and by contract of each with all, and all with each, if they shrank from carrying justice to this conclusion in their common defence. It is a thing more awful still for a nation to bring all its resources together for the end of destroying—yet this is what war is—as many of their enemies as they can in the shortest time they can, with as little loss

as they can to themselves ; nevertheless, it is inevitable, and its inevitableness is contemplated—the conclusion cannot be escaped—by Jesus Christ, who alone can estimate the resources of Satan.

Even when thus defined in brutal simplicity, war notwithstanding has aspects which are not harrowing but consoling. Many of the men who have fallen in the last six weeks were perhaps never so unselfish and pure as on their last field, when the resolution to make good their manhood against fear, and vindicate the glories of their race, enriched, and perhaps even hallowed, their nature.

“Thought shall be the harder, heart the keener,
Mood the more, as our might lessens.”

When men talk, as some talk now, as if the number were unexampled of lives lost in the few combats and skirmishes that as yet have taken place in this war, they show that they do not understand what war is, or what war has always been. War involves a loss of life at which the heart and soul revolt in awe and horror ; but would not you or I deliberately

give our life gladly, if need were, as these men have sacrificed theirs? It matters not whether a man's life be long or short, but it matters much whether he use it well. If misused it last, he is then to be pitied when the worthless frame falls to pieces.

There cannot be imagined any means whereby the ordinary man may do more for his race, and through advantaging his race advantage more the world, than the risking of life with hardy courage in the field of battle. The foundation on which the greatness of England reposes, her self-respect, her fairness of temper, her freedom, her influence in the council of nations, has been laid solid and lasting by those who have bled and died in her wars. The very name of England is compounded of the triumphs, whether in defeat or in victory, of the men bred on her soil. Which therefore is the better lot, or the better befits a man—the dying in the fire-light, the familiar faces looking on, or solitary death, whether by sudden stop or even through lingering anguish, on the hill?

When a nation is selfish and indolent and sensual, it is apt to cry aloud against war and the loss of life involved in war; and that nation is dead, and might as well be extinct. I read the other day a minute account of the so-called civilisation of the later western Roman empire, when the Romans would not fight and could not fight, preferring to make money, and surround themselves with comforts, and read and write silly books, and discourse upon the glories of Rome: and meanwhile the martial races, whom these Romans termed barbarians, were closing in upon them, and preparing to take their place. I read also a history, written by one who proudly speaks of herself as born in the porphyry-chamber at Byzantium, concerning the wars, or rather the disasters, of the later eastern empire. Unintentionally she depicts a condition of things even more contemptible than is portrayed in any account of the western empire. Theological contentions have displaced the stern controversy of war. There is visible a degrading religiosity, an abasing

valuing of life as life, but no masculine fortifying religion, and no manhood or national spirit.

I do not know, but I believe, that in the future the course of history will proceed as in the past; and if this be so, then the only means whereby civilisation, as men name it, may be prevented from ending in enervation and decay is the reconciling in the life at least of a remnant of the two Christian duties—the duty of peacemaking, to be realised for the single life by each sundry soul; and the duty resting upon each, as one in the community of the nation, of maintaining at any cost by war, and the suffering that war entails, that which he holds to be a righteous cause.

SERMON XVIII

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Ye are the light of the world.—MATTHEW v 14.

*If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light :
But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of
darkness.*—MATTHEW vi 22.

THERE is no way of revealing or interpreting the spiritual world to men other than by removing words from their common signification to a spiritual meaning. Heaven has thus two senses, the sky seen by the natural eye, and the rest from evil and peace from sin descried and desired by the soul. All the elements one after the other are employed as terms to express, or rather to hint, to men something of the primal powers and forces of the spiritual world. At one time it is fire : “One mightier than I shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” At another it is the wind : “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,

but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." At another it is water : " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Of the words thus transformed to a new use none is commoner than light. It is constantly employed to express the effect of the spirit of God upon the mind of the man who welcomes it. He who does not believe in God's power to help him is said in one phrase or another to be in darkness : " They will not be learned nor understand ; they walk in darkness " : " Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light." On the other hand, a man is said to begin to see light when he begins to let the spirit of God influence his hard self. Above all, when the God Christ came as the man Jesus in order to make it more easy for man to suppress self and seek God, the fact is expressed by the same figure : " The men that sit in darkness see a great light " : " The dayspring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to

guide their feet into the way of peace." It is said of Christ: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Jesus Christ said of himself: "I am the light of the world." He said also of those who so believe in him as to reflect the light they borrow of him: "You are the light of the world." He contrasted the two classes into which men fall, according as they absorb or do not absorb the spiritual light of which he is the source: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness."

In the account of the conversion of St. Paul, read a few minutes ago, the great light out of which came the voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" symbolises the spirit of Christ Jesus breaking in upon the great darkness of the man's soul, just as his restoration to sight from the physical blindness which ensued symbolises the change by which his spiritual eye became good instead of evil, healthy and sound instead of diseased

and depraved. It is therefore easy to see why those who adapted the Roman liturgy for the use of the English church so altered the ancient collect for this day's service as to introduce into it this figure of light. In its old form the prayer in this part ran, "Who through the preaching of the blessed apostle St. Paul hast taught the whole world"; and this they changed, so that it now runs, "hast caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world." By so doing they brought the collect into harmony with the historical facts, to commemorate which this festival is observed. For St. Paul's conversion is indeed the sudden seeing of a great light, and the gradual change in the man's spiritual eye from disease to perfect soundness.

The sound of the words, "You are the light of the world," "The light of the body is the eye," is so familiar that it might seem too superfluous to speak upon this text at all; but are the things which the words express really familiar to you or to me?

I can here only speak for myself, and I confess that they are not sufficiently familiar ; are certainly not so intimate with my mind that it takes them as a matter of course, when it has to determine which of two contradictory decisions should be made. The eye of the mind is too seldom single, too often evil. Nevertheless, I profess to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Light of the world, and therefore acknowledge that my spiritual blindness may be dispelled, if I so choose, by him. All here profess the same belief ; many have publicly promised to carry it out in their lives ; many more will soon so promise. The promise has been a lie for all those who are content with the sound of the words, and let the meaning shift for itself.

Have you ever looked out and seen the sun rise ? Have you ever stumbled along in the dark and then seen the dawn spring, and your path, and the hills, and the fields take the morning ? Anybody who has experienced that may understand what Jesus Christ means when he says, " I am the Light of the world,"

may understand what he means when he says, "In so far as your life reflects my life, you are a light of the world," or again, "In so far as your spiritual eye absorbs light from me, your whole nature is full of light." Do we merit, you or I, to be called lights of other men? Is our nature full of light and not of darkness? I am sure you will not say so, nor can I.

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ encourages the weak in faith, the backward in performance, if only they confess it and are sorry. He does not quench the smoking flax in any farthing candle light. It does give light after all, and that is something.

It is this gentleness of Christ which ought to inspire us to try harder. Anybody can better the example that he sets, and be himself the more humble for so doing, the more willing himself to seek more illumination from the Light of the world. In trying to set a better example, to become indeed a light for other men to walk by, he learns how great is his own darkness. He begins to feel that his

own eye is evil. A man must absorb light from Christ before he can give it out. Moreover, in absorbing it, he must not distort it. The eye must be single, that is, take it in just as it is given out by the Light of the world. In one sense of course no seeker after the Light ever gives it out as pure as he takes it in. His spiritual eye is not wholly sound. Such failure, inseparable from man's nature, Christ forgives. He accepts it for what it would be, not for what it is. What Christ accepts not as light is that which has passed through an eye so distorted by pride and self-sufficiency as to be robbed of all its power to purify and illumine.

Indeed, the sense of dissatisfaction with himself is perhaps the only means by which a man can tell whether his spiritual eye is sound or no. If it is pure when it has passed through the eye, it must so reveal the impurities of his soul that he cannot be other than dissatisfied and humbled. It must on the contrary have been distorted and even extinguished in the passing in, if he has any

confidence left in his own power to fight the powers of darkness. I might catalogue scores of sins and ask myself and you whether we were conscious of their presence in our hearts, yet come no nearer telling myself or you whether we draw spiritual light from its one source Christ, and give it out again to others. The test is not whether these sins have been committed or no, but whether they have been repented of, and have left us less confident in ourselves, more willing to turn to the love and the strength of God. It was a woman of the city, a sinner, of whom Jesus said to a self-righteous Pharisee, "Her sins which are many are forgiven." It was an adulteress to whom Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." It was to a false accuser and a thief that he said, "This day is salvation come to thine house." It was to a robber and a murderer that he said, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise"—and in each case the sinner, the breaker of the sixth commandment, the seventh, the eighth, or the ninth had but one merit, the certainty that he

had no merit at all. He had suffered the Light of the world to break in upon his darkness and had then learned how great that darkness was.

This is a simple test—worth more to a sinner for the direction of his life than any number of warnings against special sins from a fellow-sinner. If a man gets into the habit of applying this test to his acts, then he draws light continually from the source of light, and gives it out also to the world. For to apply this test at all he must live as it were in the daily presence of Jesus Christ as he is portrayed in the gospels, and be ever turning to him and questioning him upon points of conduct little and great, ever seeking light from the Light of the world.

SERMON XIX

STRENGTH OF SPIRIT

Strong in spirit.—LUKE ii 40.

STRENGTH of body everyone understands and can describe and define. He sees the weight lifted, the blow delivered, the leap made, the race run, and he compares what he sees with a like effort made by himself or by others, and he appraises it accordingly. Strength of mind is not quite so easy to apprehend or to measure ; nevertheless, if a man has himself anything of a mind, he may form at least some sort of conception of strength of mind. He observes how in reasoning some minds brush aside all that is irrelevant, and march straight at what is essential ; how they depend alone upon themselves and upon the facts known, and rejecting tradition, hearsay of every kind, convention, authority, seek impartially truth and reality.

If strength of mind is not so easy to seize or estimate as strength of body, there is another sort of strength still more difficult to apprehend and measure, strength of will, strength of character. The stuff on which will works is complex, intractable, and inscrutable. The instruments which it wields have often been forged by itself, and are not the endowment of nature. Accordingly its achievements are difficult to record and value ; yet recorded and valued they may be, at all events in some measure.

But there is still another strength which is hardly to be discerned or judged at all by any man, and certainly is completely and intimately known and appreciated only by God—strength of spirit, that strength which some of you have professed to seek, and others now profess that they seek.

The three kinds of strength first mentioned, strength of body, strength of mind, strength of will, are primarily endowments of nature. Men can do but a little towards acquiring them. Strength of body and strength of

mind some can never acquire at all. A man may live healthily and by rule, yet never be other than a weakling. He may spend his days in training such faculties as he has got, and in the end keep, notwithstanding, a confused brain and a shiftless reason. Strength of will some do acquire when they had little of it to begin with, but if they do acquire it, 'tis not by cultivating the little germs of it that they may possess, but by a simple exertion of the will easier to a child than to a grown man, whereby they accept the promise of God that he will give them strength. It is the creation of the other strength, strength of spirit, and therefore is in the last resort the gift of God. All the same, if a man, infirm of purpose and vacillating in will, deliberately implores his Creator to strengthen and confirm his will, when he has not first in penitential abasement asked forgiveness for sin, and begged for a portion of God's spirit, that man will not be granted what he asks, any more than if he asked in the like temper for strength of muscle or vigour of brain.

He must ask for more than strength of will, and ask in the right way. Strength of spirit includes strength of will as the greater encloses the less. More than that, the less can only be obtained by the obtaining of the greater, and by the same means, the confessing of utter helplessness, complete demerit. For how can Christ, how can God, dwell in a heart in which self is still strong? And strength of spirit can only exist through the presence of Christ within a man, the presence of the Creator himself in the nature of his creature.

I spoke last saint's day of the necessity of removing language from its ordinary sense in order to express spiritual facts. The spiritual fact of which I speak now is like the rest in this respect. It is sometimes expressed in one way, sometimes in another, but always in terms which have been shifted from their ordinary signification.

In order more clearly to pourtray the Christian conception of man's nature and of human life, I had better try to give the

rudiments of the phraseology which is thus transformed from common to spiritual use. My human nature—my body, brain, and will—is spoken of as a house or as a tent. In this house or in this tent the real ‘I’ lives, and with him either God or the Devil must dwell. It is not possible for me to live by myself. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through the wilderness seeking rest, and finding none he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” When God dwells in this house with me, it becomes a temple; in this tent, it becomes a tabernacle. If God has dwelt in it till I die, it becomes a house from heaven. In the temple of this house God or Christ, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, is said to be, to dwell, to abide. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my

blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "Know ye not how that Jesus Christ is in you?" "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "The Spirit of truth dwelleth with you and shall be in you." "The spirit of God dwelleth in you." "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." "Ye are the temple of the living God." The house in which the spirit of God or Christ is, is spoken of as founded upon a rock; that in which the spirit of God or Christ is not, is spoken of as built upon sand. To have Christ in me is to be strong. "I can do all through Christ who strengtheneth me." To have Christ in me is to have everlasting life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom

thou hast sent." "I am the life," Christ says. "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life."

It is when I consent that in the house composed of my body, brain, and will, the spirit of Christ shall dwell along with me, it is then that I begin to know what strength of spirit is. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." You or I can do greater works than Jesus did on earth, because he is no longer a man, but a spirit who can "dwell," "abide," "be in" you and me. Jesus Christ himself declares it. And to reflect is to admit its truth. Are there not as many malignant, unclean, ravening devils in the heart of any man as Jesus ever cast out of a single heart? Yet by his spirit they may be overpowered, he says, even more completely than they were overpowered by him when his spirit was trammelled and confined by the body.

Does this give an inkling of what strength of spirit means, the strength that comes to a

man when he takes Christ into the house built of his body and brain and will?—when he begins to be certain that the kingdom of heaven is within him, that a life has begun for him which is everlastingly permanent?

Moreover, to discover the chief lineaments of strength of spirit, there is no better way than I can think of than by imagining the heavenly perfection which will one day belong to those in whose earthly house Christ has dwelt when the body has at length ceased to exert its force, and the spirit of evil cannot try to enter into it any more. The disembodied spirit knows no passions. Therefore he who in the body has strength of spirit resists his passions, and, as St. Paul says, keeps his body under. The disembodied spirit cannot lie. Therefore the strong in spirit fights for the truth and hates hypocrisy. The disembodied spirit does not know envy, pride, malice, hatred, uncharitableness. Therefore he who in this life is reinforced by the spirit of God is humble, and loves his neighbour as himself. Indeed, if we think

upon it, we have got to confess that this sort of perfection is plainly what Jesus in his teaching requires from men even in this world when they are still in the body, and subject to all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Be ye perfect," he says, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Such perfection is strength of spirit, and neither you nor I can have it except the spirit of God "dwells," "abides," "is in" us, unless we are each "the temple of God."

SERMON XX

THINGS INDIFFERENT

Why dost thou judge thy brother? . . . for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.—ROM. xiv 10.

IN the passage from which my text is taken St. Paul shows that indifference to things indifferent, that insistence upon things essential, which makes him who was the least of the Apostles in opportunity the greatest of the Apostles in achievement. "It is not my concern," he argues, "nor is it yours, what opinion a man may hold if he has once professed his faith in Jesus Christ and thrown in his lot with our brotherhood. By declaring himself the willing servant of Christ Jesus he has won freedom from all criticism so long as he proves his sincerity by recognising that

others have the same freedom as himself in being, like himself, declared servants of Christ. Whether he be weak in his faith or strong, if faith he professes to have, welcome him to your brotherhood without desiring to contest his opinions. These opinions notwithstanding, God has welcomed him already." Anyone who says he is a Christian, every Christian ought to think sincere. In other words, no Christian has any right in Christ to judge another. The one and the other may be separated widely in opinions, even in ecclesiastical and theological opinions, and yet both be followers of Christ, both enamoured of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, St. Paul asserts, is not opinions, "but is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost"—things which none can measure but He who has them and He who imparts them—the same God who will judge men's secrets by Jesus Christ.

That which I spoke of last saint's day—the dwelling of the spirit of Christ in the temple of a man's heart—was to St. Paul the

one essential thing. He who could say with all the sincerity and force of his nature, "Jesus is the Lord," had begun to share in eternal life, and had received forgiveness for his sins, his faith in Christ having put him right with God. To express this thought St. Paul found a phrase already coined for him in the Greek translation of the Old Testament—"The just shall live by his faith," and this phrase he loved to quote. For a man to say with sincere belief and trust, "Jesus is the Lord," was, St. Paul saw, to confess that Jesus Christ in dying had delivered him from slavery to the law and slavery to the body, and in rising again had assured him eternal life. The Christ who had died and risen was now by the Holy Spirit within his heart, imparting life and freedom.

Accepting baptism the believer so veritably accepts the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for him on the cross that he may be said to be in baptism crucified with Jesus Christ; so veritably intends to die to his old self that he

may be said in baptism to be buried with Jesus ; so veritably desires spiritual life and seeks glory that he may be said in baptism to rise from the grave of Jesus with the glorified Christ. And then the glorified Christ becomes by his spirit the controlling power in the believer's nature, imparting life and the desire for the perfected spiritual peace and sense of achievement which St. Paul calls "the glory of the sons of God."

Is it surprising if St. Paul, penetrated by the reality and the solemnity of these convictions, would not believe that men who had sought baptism could be other than sincere ? Is it surprising that he would not admit the right of any member of the Christian brotherhood to doubt the sincerity of another ? The Lord himself had said, "Judge not, that you be not judged." The spirit of Christ within St. Paul compels him to reiterate the precept : "Who are you to judge the servant of Christ ? To his own master he stands or he falls." It may be your own weakness of faith that tempts you

to doubt him. We shall all stand, you as he, before the judgment seat of Christ, who alone can judge his servants.

In the presence of realities so tremendous, or should I not rather say—in the presence of Truth Himself, mere opinions, mere conventional notions of right and wrong, the eating of one food rather than another, the observing of one day rather than another, are shown to be what they are—trivial, meaningless things. In that presence there is only one real essential thing, sincerity of faith so intense that it absorbs and keeps that which it realises of the spirit of Christ. The sincere in faith are free from all conventional opinions, all trivial distinctions between day and day, food and no food. Spiritual life is not dependent upon observances so trifling. These things, St. Paul avers, are things indifferent to the strong in faith. They are not real, or they are real only to the unbelieving or to men so weak in faith that they have not grasped the spiritual significance of the life of Jesus, of the crucifixion and the death of

Jesus Christ, of the resurrection of Christ and its sequel, the gift of life to him who believes. He who has indeed grasped these realities cannot borrow his attitude from the men around him. He is possessed of a new nature, a new life. His will is so transformed that he can rise above the fog of men's conventions and sentiments, and see clearly what God's will is, the one good and admirable and perfect thing.

Such at least is St. Paul's conception of the place which things indifferent ought to take in the Christian's life. The unrealities, the conventions, the opinions, the sentiments of men, varying from century to century, from generation to generation, from year to year, are of no consequence to the strong in faith. These, guided by the spirit of Christ, occupy themselves with things more permanent and substantial. Nevertheless, the apostle has no sooner expressed this conception than he sets about showing that it cannot be realised within the Christian brotherhood on earth, and hinting that it will not be realised

till the glory of the sons of God is attained. The freedom of the strong in faith, absolute in theory, is circumscribed in practice. The brotherhood of Christians includes every degree of faith, and none, however strong in faith himself, can rid himself of the obligation to remove impediments to his brother's progress in faith. There are circumstances in which the strong in faith are not justified in exercising their freedom in respect to things indifferent. If they are indeed Christ's, if the spirit of Christ is in them, they must act as Jesus acted in his life on earth, and sacrifice this freedom for the good of others. All things are lawful to them, but all things are not expedient. They are bound to consider the effect upon others of everything that they do, and at the same time refrain in brotherly love from resenting the curtailment of their freedom in Christ. They have no reason or right to judge others for attaching value to things which a stronger faith must know to be trivial.

This teaching, as it happens, is peculiarly

useful for you and me at the present day. The English Church, that part of the Christian brotherhood to which we belong, is disquieted by controversies about things indifferent—ceremonies, vestments, symbolical acts, observance of days, partaking of food or refraining from food at certain times, and the like. The unreality, the unspirituality of all such things is seen at once by any one who will take St. Paul's point of view, and will ask himself, "Are these things an essential part of that life which I draw from Christ, the marks of which are freedom and permanence?" Everyone who has the faith to put that question honestly to himself will answer, No. At the same time he cannot stop there—that would be to judge his neighbour—but with St. Paul he must again ask himself, "Which will help my weak brother most, to argue with him about these indifferent, conventional, trivial points, which evidently mean much to him, or to fall in with them when he is by, though he knows perfectly well that in others' presence I should do otherwise?" St. Paul's

answer is perfectly clear—"Treat them as things indifferent, sacrifice your freedom for your brother's sake. To the weak become weak, that you may gain the weak ; become all things to all men that you may save some."

SERMON XXI

IDEALS

A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.—MATTHEW v 14.

FOLLOWING hard upon the Beatitudes this saying derives its meaning from them. Merit my blessing, Jesus says, in these respects and you shall become as a city set upon an hill that cannot be hid. If you set no store by yourselves, but stand before God as beggars of his bounty ; if you mourn your sins and shortcomings ; if you endure the scorn and ill usage of the world ; if you hunger and thirst for reconciliation with God ; if you are merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers ; if you are ready to face persecution and reproach and slander for my sake and for favour with God, you become thereby to the traveller in this world as a sign to guide him up and on to the mount of God. Overcome for the sake of others, that is, for my sake, the in-

cessant temptation to build the city of your life upon the plain. Even if each day's labour is made the longer and the more exacting because you must climb the hill, yet the labour is not thrown away. It is repaid not in money, or honour from men, or rank, or applause, things that do not last, but with treasure in heaven, with the souls of men.

The plain at the foot of the hill is fertile and populous. It is easy to build there, and the house when built is more snug and pleasant. There are sheltered places and bosomed nooks in the lowland where winds of scorn and abuse and persecution never blow. A city may be made an earthly paradise if it be placed deftly under the hill. The uplands are bleak and forbidding, stony places swept by cold winds. A city built there among the rocks is a comfortless place to live in. It meets the scorching sun and the remorseless storm.

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ bids men build on the hill and forsake the level, and this for a reason which nobody can understand who

has not the spirit of Christ. Men should build on the hill not for their own comfort or pleasure, but that others may see their city and be tempted to climb the hill, and perhaps may end in building a lodge there for themselves. The discomfort and the hardship of living on the hill are to be endured for the sake of others.

They are wrong who say that a man's first duty is to try and win heaven for himself, or as they sometimes seem to judge, to try and escape hell. It is not so. No man can be a disciple of Christ who is so selfish. Where is the selfishness in poverty of spirit, in grief, in meekness, in hunger and thirst for reconciliation with God, in mercy, in pureness of heart, in the desire to be peacemakers, in patience under persecution and calumny? There is none. Christ blesses men if they adopt an attitude which turns their whole life into a conflict, and he tells them that this conflict must be maintained not in any selfish spirit, but to help others to enter upon the same conflict. The blessing of Christ can

only be kept if it be passed on to others. If men would keep it for themselves alone, they are denied it. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Christ declares in these words that no one can partake of his spirit who does not love his neighbour as himself; and more, that the ideal of discipleship is to love his neighbour better than himself—"That ye love one another in the measure in which I have loved you."

I dare not say of any other that judged by this standard his life is a failure, but of my own I know this is the case, that my prayer must be for mercy and pity. The vision of discipleship which the spiritual eye discerns when this passage of the gospel is read, is, I confess, from God. It cannot be demonstrated, but demonstrated it is, and I know it. I know also that it has not always been a vision, but that he who loved to call

himself the Son of man realised it in his life here among men ; and that the lives of some of his disciples plainly reflect its light. It is not, therefore, a thing too high for men. They may painfully and gradually work the spiritual tissue of this dream of goodness into the web of their life ; and he is condemned who does not try.

Where can such visions come from, if not from a more real and stable world than this ? It is that they may approach nearer to that world and draw others with them, that men are bidden to build their city on the hill. There the vision of discipleship is not so often blurred or concealed by mists. There men are nearer the kingdom of heaven, nearer to righteousness and peace and joy in the spirit of Christ.

Somebody has said that a man cannot be great who does not attempt to achieve in his lifetime what could scarcely be accomplished in many lifetimes. So no one can be a disciple of Christ who does not attempt to make of his life a picture of discipleship, even if in

his hours of worldly wisdom and worldly discretion he may judge success impossible. A man lives his life well only if there be devotion in it to something unattained, and contempt for what has been achieved ; he must spend his life in climbing, or he will not benefit his fellow-men.

A city set on an hill cannot be hid. It must attract the eye. As a spiritual thing such a city remains conspicuous always—even when its builder is gone. It is a city with foundations, and lasts long after the judgment day. If its courts were built as courts of peace, and humility, and mercy, and sorrow, and righteousness, and pureness of heart, it became in that degree exempted from decay. Where one has built enduringly, another may build also, and build all the better for the example of him who went before. Did ever hands raise earthly buildings more nearly imperishable than the amphitheatres, aqueducts, and palaces of Rome ? These are enduring because they were the outcome of an architectural tradition to which

generation after generation of builders contributed, till the ideal of one century became the builder's rule for the next. So it is with the men who determine to build their city on an hill. They have the example of thousands who have done the like before. But better than that, there exists a perfect pattern of the city as it should be built. How the master builder built such a city is all narrowly described and known. Thus there are two things to help men in their building—the pattern preserved in the gospel, and the example of other builders. Of those other builders those will teach best the masons' mystery to you or me who may have built before our eyes such a city as we desire ourselves to build. It is easier for us to build the court of peace, or of suffering for Christ's sake, or of love, or of pureness of heart, if we have long watched a former builder at the same work, who built on in the hope that we should one day copy him. A city set on an hill cannot be hid. If it be seen rising day after day, it becomes a mental picture in

which every line and angle are distinct, the whole being as clear and familiar as the fields which a man knows first ; to which the mind travels back when it would fix the points of the compass.

Not to build on the hill is to build on the plain. If I do not build courts of peace, and mercy, and pureness of heart, then I build courts of strife, and hate, and vain glory, and carnal curiosity. Even if I mean to build on the hill and build well, nevertheless I often build as if the city were on the plain, and as if its streets were to bear different names. What must become of me if I do not try to build on the hill at all ? But if in the main I really try to build on the hill and on the true foundation, then my city shall at least save its builder in that day, and perhaps save others too. " Let every man be careful to build upon the true foundation, Jesus Christ. Some build the walls of gold, and silver, and precious stones, others build them of timber and straw and reeds. The day of the Lord shall reveal and test the work as with fire.

The solid walls shall remain and bring reward to their builder. The timber and straw and reeds shall burn away ; yet if those who built thus foolishly nevertheless built on the true foundation on the hill, their work may perish, but they shall themselves survive the fiery ordeal."

SERMON XXII

ENTHUSIASM

Fervent in spirit.—ROMANS xii 11.

THE precise cause why one day in the year rather than another is associated with the name of a particular apostle or evangelist is now scarcely ever to be discovered with certainty. Nevertheless, there is a strong presumption that every one of these saints' days does commemorate the most important event in the history of the saint in whose honour it is observed. If tradition is often vague and inarticulate, it is at the same time veracious. It may forget, but it does not intentionally falsify.

The evidence of tradition, however, is sometimes deliberately ignored ; and this has taken place in respect to the 29th of June. Tradition declares that St. Peter and St. Paul both suffered martyrdom on the same day ;

and in accord with tradition the Early Church commemorated on this day of the year both apostles together. It is easy to see why a church that paid singular honour to St. Peter should come to think that St. Paul was sufficiently honoured, if the day of his conversion was commemorated, and should be tempted to let the commemoration of his martyrdom fall into abeyance.

But apart from this circumstance, interesting as it is historically, it is matter for regret that both apostles should not be commemorated together. The two men must always be associated in men's minds. There is a characteristic common to both which makes this inevitable. Fervency of spirit, strength of enthusiasm—this is the mark of both. Take it away from either, and he has lost that which differences him from the bulk of mankind. But for this neither would have been selected for the work of building up the Church of Christ.

It is the case that men are great in proportion to the strength of their enthusiasm.

The Old Testament is one long record of the imperious might of enthusiasm. "The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire." This fire, the symbol of Jehovah's power, manifests itself in all the men who become instruments to perform his will—soldiers like those whose figures depicted on glass you study every morning in this church, Joshua, Gideon, Saul, David, and Jonathan; prophets like Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah. They are commissioned of God because they are fervent in spirit. It is for the same fire that John the Baptist was commissioned, and Peter, and Paul—a burning enthusiasm, a devouring ardour, fit to kindle men.

The like mark of greatness is visible on the character of men prominent in what is miscalled profane history. Those who make or mar a generation, make it or mar it because they possess in greater measure than others a capacity for enthusiasm. The enthusiasm may be beneficent or it may be malign, but exist it must to a singular degree in every man who greatly influences others.

At this point a distinction must be drawn, the distinction, namely, between the gifts of God and the gift of God. The gifts are natural endowments, energy, strength, sagacity, powers of body, mind, and character, all of them bestowed upon man without his asking. The gift is the divine fire, the spirit of God himself, the gift of life, which is only bestowed on such as ask for it. Without the gift, the gifts may be put to the very worst uses. They may be a curse to him who has them and to his fellows. But if the gift be added to the gifts, the gifts, as St. Paul would say, become the arms of righteousness wielded in God's cause. The more abundant the gifts, the richer the gift. The gift cannot create the gifts, it can only sanctify them. St. Peter had always been confident, vigorous, intrepid, fervid, and clear-sighted; St. Paul always logical, original, fiery, indomitable. They were both in nature leaders of men. When to these gifts the gift was added, St. Peter could not become a zealot, St. Paul could no longer remain a persecutor. They

must work for God; they could not work against God.

God has given man much, and would fain give him more. What he has given cannot be used to the best purpose till the something more has been sought. Asked for it must be. Otherwise it cannot be got, the divine fire, the spirit whose name is Life. I shall never be fervent in spirit until this God-given force is active not only within me, purging the natural fire, controlling all my being, but active also outside me, creating enthusiasm in others, recruiting from the men around me the army of God.

It is this contagiousness which makes fervency of spirit such an incalculable force in human life; so powerful a weapon for good, if it be indeed augmented by the devouring, purging fire, which God imparts to the earnest seeker.

The man of the last generation who of all men did most to reinvigorate the life of the English Church, although he died outside her communion, lets out the secret of his

fertile and lasting influence, when he relates how the thought grew upon him and possessed him, "that deliverance is wrought, not by the many, but by the few, not by bodies but by persons," and how from his schooldays onwards he loved and prized more every day the motto he had chosen as his own—"Exoriare aliquis." That call must be answered and obeyed by everyone who seeks the gift, and therefore desires to throw in his lot with the kingdom of God. Why, it is obeyed even by those who have never sought the gift, but have been content with the gifts alone. In every great epoch of history this contagion has been at work. The prevailing characteristic of the time has been fervency of spirit. Overtopping their fellows have been men of gigantic energy, possessed as it were by devouring fire, and kindling in their contemporaries an enthusiasm like their own. It is at times like these, and only then, that any country is great, that any people is in truth a nation. For the rest of the time it may have the name and the semblance of

greatness, but is without the substance, without the spirit of life, dry bones without flesh and blood, muscle and sinew.

It is the same with lesser bodies, such as that which at this time is congregated in this house. Is the school afire and alive? Are the gifts nurtured and used, to say nothing of the seeking for the gift? If it be the case, and sometimes I think that it is so, that the school as a whole is deficient in fervour, in fire, in enthusiasm; if it be the case, then the blame rests with each one in the many. It cannot but be that there is a capacity for enthusiasm in plenty here, if only someone would call it forth. Is there none who has fervour among his gifts, and the power to infect us all? Is there none to respond to the call, "Exoriare aliquis"?

If they are right who say that this is a generation devoid of enthusiasm, although it have excitement in plenty, there is the greater cause why someone should arise to infect it. The dry bones may be made to live. The awakening may come at any time, suddenly.

Any day some one of you who are young may arise and help to dispel the lethargy of the time, as wind clears the sky. It has been done before, it will be done again ; and why not by you ? St. Peter and St. Paul both were once but Peter and Paul, boys unknown and unmarked, but possessed of gifts which might be used or not, just as you are possessed of gifts which you may not use, yet may use, if you will.

Peter and Paul not only used the gifts, they sought the gift. Hence they infected others not only with that life-giving energy or fire which ends in the same place in which it begins and operates, namely, here in this world, but also with a more vital, a more vitalising fire, which cannot be extinguished, and which outlives the body and shall outlive this world, a thing vouchsafed only to such as are—

“still unsatisfied,
Still seeking for a better thing than best,
A fairer thing than fairest, without rest.”

SERMON XXIII

THE EDIFYING OF LIFE

My son is yet young and tender, and the work is great. For the palace is not for man but for the Lord God.—

I CHRON. xxix 1.

THERE is an allegory in Plato that some have read and more have read of. Men sit, he says, in a cave with their backs to the sunlight. To and fro behind them pass things real and stable and everlasting, the shadows of which fall upon the wall of the cave. The men in the cave are for the most part content with its twilight, which they take for light, and with the shadows on the wall, which they take for realities ; but now and then one of them may bethink himself, and turning his eyes round to the light may understand. He then descries everything, not as it seems to be, but as it is—real manhood, real goodness, real beauty, real truth, real life—the veritable things which throw the shadows that with most men pass for realities.

It is this world of light and of reality into which men are transported, if they like, on Michaelmas day. All the parts of Scripture read in church suggest to them the existence of a very different world from that which they see with the natural eye. They are bidden to turn their heads round, and in room of the shadows cast on the back wall of the cave, to study the things which cast them; and the real, actual world in which these entities exist eternally, the spiritual world, the world of ideas, the world of ideals, the kingdom of God.

It was in that world the Jews loved to think that the temple took shape. The palace of the Lord God which Solomon built was modelled, they said, upon the tabernacle set up at each halting place in their vagrant journey from Egypt to Canaan; and that, they made sure, had been designed after a divine pattern divulged to Moses on Sinai, "to be an example or shadow" (mark the word) "of heavenly things"; and divulged, no doubt it was, in a far truer way than they were used

to imagine. Moses was of those who are not content with the twilight in the cave, and the flitting, wavering, misleading, ill-apprehended shadows. He had turned him about to the light and had seen God face to face. The palace for the Lord that he builded after the patterns which the light revealed was not made of bars and boards, silver sockets, golden rings, and veils of blue and purple and scarlet, as the men in the cave conceived. It was made by impressing somehow by the power of the spirit of God upon the race of Israel the persistent conviction that they had a destiny to fulfil as part of Jehovah's eternal purpose. The tabernacle that Moses builded he framed out of the souls of his countrymen, and being spiritual it exists still, and still increases in stateliness and beauty, now in the times of the Gentiles when the times of the Jews have for the present been fulfilled.

Whensoever a man undertakes to build a palace for the Lord God, he must, like Moses, go to the spiritual world for his pattern. The temple to be raised is not made with

hands. It has more substance : it is not one of those shadows on the wall. It is real. The pattern is in fact the veritable image of God, Christ Jesus himself. The endeavouring to make out that pattern, to build a palace after that copy in his own soul, will and shall put power and reality into everything a man does. He cannot be satisfied then with things just as he finds them—that would be to be content with the shadows ; he will always be referring to his pattern, and examining things in the searching light of truth, the light that is the knowledge of God.

The foundation of such a palace is laid when anyone begins in this way to frame his life upon the pattern furnished by the gospels. If he is honest and sticks to his purpose, and does not reject the Comforter, he will continue, if not to raise a palace, nevertheless to build what God for Christ's sake will take for a palace, in judging the builder's work by his motives and ideals and efforts. His would indeed be a desperate case whose building were otherwise judged.

The one requirement is that it be raised in intention and by labour upon the one foundation, Christ. The honesty of purpose will redeem the whole. The foundation will glorify the whole.

This is the beginning of a school year. A good many of you are fresh to Westminster, and know next to nothing of the ambitions and aims, the merits and demerits, the temptations and the inspirations proper to the place. We who have been longer here welcome you to your room in the lap of this gentle mother, who for some five centuries has reared up children to play their parts as men to the honour and profit of the state. We know that it depends greatly upon us whether the new comers will soon or late learn to cherish her as she deserves to be cherished. If we are true and faithful sons of this loving foster-mother, then from the first we shall esteem the last come not as strangers, but as brothers and kin.

For us, as for them, this time brings a fresh opportunity, offers a new starting point.

Shall we break with old faults, shall we discard foolish or evil habits, shall we throw off soiled and ill-becoming views of life and duty? Shall we turn round from the shadows to the realities? Shall we build a palace for the Lord God?

The new comers ought to find here—do they find it?—a pure and wholesome air fit to breed hardy spirits. The life in which they now share they ought to discover ere long to be turned to the future, eager for expansion, dissatisfied with performance, discontented with the past, a corporate life bursting with vigour, active in every direction, willing in work, ardent in play, jealous of its good name, quick to abet good and to check evil, determined to be a power and a stay to the cause of truth and godliness. Even on this the third day of term they should have begun to feel that there are spiritual influences, angelic forces, nearer than of old, ready at their call to aid them in eradicating evil and implanting good.

They come to us, prepared for much,

perhaps. They may be aware that many great and many famous men have issued out of Westminster, and they may dream haply of inheriting their mantle, and even of receiving a double portion of their spirit. At the least they are eager to be endowed with the sense of great traditions.

It is our business to make sure that the past with which we endow them is not dead and antiquated, but is a living force compact of animating and invigorating memories ; no fossilised past of customs and forms out of which the vital breath passed long ago, though a tender, if misplaced, affection delay to put it out of sight ; not a past which encumbers the present, but a fertile, fructifying ground, from which spring living flowers of imagination and thought, of virtuous endeavour, and of manliness and honest rivalry, wherewith to deck the present.

We can make new comers free of our past, but the future is not entirely ours to give. It is their own quite as much as it is ours, in some respects even more than it is

ours; and plainly we may claim from them their part in the covenant, executed here in God's presence this day. They are young and tender, and the work is great. Nevertheless they may achieve it. They are expected to achieve it, if they can, in the years to be spent with their foster-mother. They have duties by her as she has duties by them. Them and us she would fain see build a far more glorious palace for the Lord God than the temple of Solomon ever was.

This we shall not accomplish if we take things as we find them, nor try to improve by keeping the ideal pattern always in the soul's eye and working by it. It is fatal to gaze at the shadow which it throws. We must view the thing itself. It is not enough to acknowledge the necessity for a pattern to build by. The pattern must be copied faithfully and painfully. It is not enough to turn the face now and again to the light in order to scan the figures, and then return in contentment to the gloom and the shadows of the cave. But we must love

to carry thoughts and ambitions, impressions and imaginings, fancies and sentiments, inspirations such as those which emerge from the past in which we glory, out of the cave into the broad light of day. Then we may hope each to rear his life as a holy house, a temple not made with hands; and the house so reared will in its turn become part of the greater and more stately palace for the Lord God which the school may build, if it will.

No one can say for sure whether this term, for instance, the foundations of the greater house are already laid deep, each stone resting securely on the rock of the true Foundation, each wall built true to the pattern as scanned in the searching light of heaven; or whether only a few stones are as yet in their place, while the others are either still to lay or are supported by nothing but banks of sand.

You are young and tender, and the work is great. Sometimes every stone you lay will be raised by a heart-breaking effort, and

even when you think it placed, the stone may seem to roll back down hill or sink and be lost. Our palace can not be completed in a term, or indeed at all. Nevertheless, it is worth while, we know, to build on. Though it will never be finished, it will go on growing. There are great churches which have been hundreds of years in the building and are not absolutely completed yet. There is always some new grace to add, some old stone to be replaced or secured. But the building is in use all the while, worshipped in, prayed in, lifting men above their work-a-day lives, and teaching them something of the omnipotence and the holiness of God, of the sanctity and the glory of human life. So, as we labour at our palace, we may know that, as the work proceeds, even if it be unending, we are all the while making it easier for those who come after us here, and for many another, unconnected in time and place with us, to grasp the notion of a true education, a developing of human nature by the aid of the spirit of God.

SERMON XXIV

THE TWO KINGDOMS

I send you forth as lambs among wolves.—LUKE x 3.

WHEN Herod stopped John the Baptist's mouth, Jesus himself for himself in his own name took up at once John's cry, "Repent; the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That in effect is the gospel, the sum of Christ's teaching as a fact in history, attested by contemporary evidence more complete and conclusive than any which can be furnished for most of the events of that time. The teaching in broad outline and sometimes in minute detail has been preserved for posterity by four several men, two of whom did not themselves hear it, while the others did not when they heard it understand much about it; as indeed is

admitted in the documents themselves, and is plain from what is said at the beginning of the Acts, that the risen Christ had still to instruct the disciples concerning the kingdom of God, and that even thereafter they could ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Nevertheless, misapprehended as it was, and wrested from its spiritual bearings, the conception of an empire of God had caught the imagination of men. The Word had sown himself in the heart of the race, and should fructify, generation after generation, multiplying and spreading, and withal increasing in vigour, just as the natural seed of wheat has spread all the world over from its home in the alluvial banks of the Euphrates, and has lost thereby none of its generative or nutritive power.

Pilate's question put to Jesus from the Praetorium in Jerusalem, "Art thou a king then?" was soon to be put to the Christ by thousands in every corner of the seething Roman Empire, from workshop and market-

place, from school and synagogue, from palace and hovel; and the answer, "To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," was not always to be met, as it was met by Pilate, with the cynical retort, "What is truth?" Two empires clashed when Pilate and Jesus stood face to face—an empire of men, founded, as all such empires must in the last resort be founded, upon physical force, and the empire of God, which not only has nothing at all to do with physical force, but is based upon something antagonistic to it, irreconcilable with the exercise of physical force, upon love and forbearance of man with man. The two sorts of empires will always exist together so long as this world lasts. He is a bad citizen of the one and a misguided citizen of the other who confounds them. Christ himself kept the two powers, the spiritual and the temporal, distinct. The power that Pilate represented was conferred "from above." The guilt of Jesus Christ's condemnation, Christ himself said, lay rather

with the soul of him who had delivered Jesus by a false accusation into Pilate's power.

But be that as it may, the fact that such an argument could be used at all—that the empire of God as proclaimed by Jesus was a menace to the empire of Rome—seems certainly to justify the inference that the phrase, the kingdom of heaven or empire of God, did bring up by association the idea of the empire of Rome; or perhaps it would be more reasonable to argue, that the mental picture of a kingdom of God was made possible to ordinary men by the mental picture they had already formed of an empire of Rome co-extensive with the discovered world. It is therefore not far from the truth to suppose that the words of Jesus to the Seventy, "I send you forth as lambs among wolves," did suggest one substantial part of the idea of the Roman empire ever present in the thoughts of the prouder races compelled to accept it. To these Rome was the spoiler of the world, the devastator of the nations; they spoke of her sons as the she-wolf's suck-

lings, who had drunk in the lust for plunder with the milk of their wolf-nurse, a lust that neither east nor west could satisfy.

Was there one of the Seventy who did not think of the contrast when as emissaries of the empire of God they were bidden go forth as lambs among wolves? The kingdom of the Lamb was other, they must at least have dimly discerned, than the empire of the Wolf, the peace of God than the Roman peace. They saw selfishness and rapacity in the one: as ambassadors from the other they were bidden proclaim gentleness and self-denial.

In the providence of God, Rome taught the world sternly, remorselessly, many a much-needed lesson; but these lessons were moral, not spiritual. She was God's instrument, not God's word. It was a new thing when within the empire of Rome another empire with different claims was announced, an empire best to be extended by those who go out as lambs among wolves, who take no food with them or money to buy it, and

neither demand nor seize it, who carry no weapons, and if they meet with hostility turn their backs, who cannot enforce that for which they go forth.

The idea was new then, but is it old now? Is it not always fresh with the dew of heaven upon it every time it visits the heart? When it comes at all, it cannot come as a thought out-worn, but is always infinite in variety.

If the seventy ambassadors had asked their king what all was implied in his figures of lamb and wolf, he would have but repeated for interpretation of the one word the thoughts which he had expressed already in the sermon on the mount, and for the other would no doubt have read for them the secrets in the hearts of their natural instructors, the Scribes and Pharisees. The wolves in spirit, the adherents of the empire of the world, are all who think first of self, to whom nothing is sacred but their own advantage, who to gratify their passions trample under foot the most precious possessions of other men, the

honour of others, the love of others, the purity of others. Even here in this little community, always changing yet never extinct, this body, framed of some twelve score souls of divers ages, from the youngest new-comer to the grey-headed man who now speaks to him, of divers tempers and experiences, from him who sees the golden gates of life turning, and in fiery hope pushes through them, to him who has left them far behind, and begins to debate whether at the end of his journey he may be able to say to the king with sincere self-condemnation that he has been but an unprofitable servant,—even in this little community there have shown themselves from time to time, and there will always show themselves, wolfish spirits, persons who devastate like wolves, from whom even the lambs in Christ's fold are not safe. If they do not rend they bite, and their bite is tainted and tainting. And there are other wolves worse than those which frankly display their predatory instinct, wolves, as they are called, in sheep's clothing.

that pretend to be harmless, but stealthily, cunningly, treacherously, pursue their wolfish designs.

Nor are these two the only species of wolves that sometimes appear in this land, which, like every other corner of the earth, belongs in part to the empire of the world and in part to the empire of God. Besides the wolves that ravin openly and the wolves that dog their prey stealthily, there are wolves which hardly know themselves to be such, having worn sheep's clothing so long that they even mistake themselves for sheep. These are the self-deceived who cannot measure their own selfishness or wolfishness, nor can divest themselves of it, forasmuch as they descry it not. They have let the habit grow of thinking themselves no worse than their neighbours. When a man is always making excuses for himself it is a certain sign that he has the wolf's nature. Why excuse himself, if sinned he has not? To make excuses is to forgive himself for selfishness of one kind or another. It is a usurpation.

Forgiveness must be craved ; it cannot be seized. Mercy can never be exercised by anybody upon himself. God may be merciful and forgive me, if I be sorry for sin. Even men may forgive me ; but I have no manner of right to forgive myself. Deep down in the heart of the unconscious hypocrite there is always the feeling that his shortcomings are things which he can or might find palliation for ; that indeed they are not desperate. Moreover, not only am I too ready to forgive myself ; I am always too ready to believe myself right. My judgments of my own conduct are as perverse as my judgments of others. I do not detect the wolf's spirit in the one case, in the other I detect it too quickly.

... In this little congregation there is probably none frankly wolfish, purposefully devoted to the empire of Satan, but there are certainly some who thinking themselves lambs, conceiving themselves to belong to the empire of God, are nevertheless mistaken. They are mistaken if they do not feel that they

need God's forgiveness every hour. They are mistaken if they do not see that much must be done before they are quite rid of the wolf's spirit. They are mistaken if they claim to be profitable servants. They are mistaken if they take the promises of God as certainties, but scarcely esteem the warnings of God to be certainties too. Why, in this very charge of Jesus Christ to the Seventy there is a warning embarrassing and disquieting. "If in any city your message," he says, "be not accepted, it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city." If it were so then, after the Word had been once preached, what of those who may study the Word daily in an open book and yet reject him?

There are in life many problems which become neither fewer nor more soluble as we grow older. God's dealings with men in the mass will continue to be mysterious until the last page of history is turned, but for each man singly the one thing that most concerns him may become plainer day by day if he

desire to apprehend it—the dealing of God with himself, the work of the Spirit in his heart. Faith grows, faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the Spirit's unseen power. Love grows, love of Christ, and through love of Christ love of God and charity with men. Peace grows, the peace of God which I shall invoke for you ere you separate, the peace that sanctifies Death himself and takes away his sting. The world falls away and its passing ambitions and disappointments, and in the room thereof arises a growing love for the kingdom of God.

SERMON XXV

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.—LUKE xvii 10.

JESUS CHRIST knowing, as the Son of man, man's bias to self-flattery, and knowing as the Son of God and as man's judge how hazardous this bias is, here corrects it with blunt directness. "Performance of duty is no merit. Do faithfully and punctiliously all that God commands thee to do; and having achieved that which thou well knowest none save thyself has ever achieved, thou art nevertheless an unprofitable servant. Thou hast not exceeded thy duty. Nay, if thou indeed believe that thou hast performed thy whole duty thou art judged already; for thou hast judged thyself."

Christians in Christian charity and in gratitude designate as saints some who appear to them to have served God less unprofitably than others ; and in this doubtless they do well, so long at least as they are careful not to confound the judgment of men with the judgment of Christ himself, and are careful to realise that in commemorating men like themselves they but show their thankfulness for what they believe to be encouraging examples of faithful service of God rendered possible by spiritual strength derived from Jesus Christ.

This, and this only, is the teaching of the Anglican Church in regard to this day's festival, as indeed is plain from the collect for this day, which in the sixteenth century was substituted for an older form which did not inculcate this teaching. Nor could any other teaching accord with the gospel. The one exemplar for the Christian is He after whom he is called. Believing in Him, convinced that he partakes of His Spirit, he believes and is convinced that this indwelling Spirit

admits him into communion with all besides in whom He dwells.

It is not, however, with the principal thought suggested by the festival of All Saints that I am concerned now, but with the responsibility for the use of the gift of life under which all men lie, under which those whom we commemorate each in his generation once lay.

Whether men in the bulk recognise this responsibility more than was once the case, there is of course no certain means of telling. It is impossible to make sure what course spiritual movements take, or to measure their intensity. Progress in this kind is made up of innumerable tendencies, each in itself insignificant. A man knows that in the life of his generation there is spiritual movement of many kinds, but he may well be mistaken in determining the set of the current. Acknowledging therefore that error is possible, I should be sorry to say in so many words that there is progress in the way in which men regard their duties and responsibilities; never-

theless, I cannot help thinking that there has been progress, and progress capable even of a rough sort of measurement. There are more men now, perhaps, who put their spare time—the *tempora subseciva* of life—to a wiser use than there were last century, or even last generation. Public sentiment may still condone many forms of selfishness, but it condones less readily the more brutal kinds. In a blundering way, no doubt, yet meaning well, it countenances the efforts of those who honestly try to make brotherly love an effectual force in knitting man to man and class to class. It does recognise the duty of service. Hosts of men still see no rule in life but self-advancement and self-enjoyment, but there would seem to be more deserters from their ranks than from the battalions of such as have already learned that the service of man is the service of God. More get to feel that, like every other thing of value possessed by men, life has its obligations which cannot be evaded without detracting from its value. More come to understand

that they approach wisdom and happiness just so far as they learn that the true enjoyment of life is commensurate with the willingness with which they endeavour to perform its duties; that they are never happier than when mind and body are occupied every waking hour in doing that work to which their conscience has given its adherence.

There is no one in this place, for example, who would not acknowledge, if the question were put to him, that he ought to make as much of his life as he can, serving God with it by serving others. He might say, however, that he scarcely saw how he could set about this service until he became a man. You may all be sure that you are in the street Straight if the one thought is never wholly lost sight of, that this is your time of preparation for leading a life of service when you are grown. You are here in order that you may train will and brain and body for manhood, storing your frame with health, your mind with knowledge, and your character with purpose and decision. Anything that conflicts

with this ideal of school-life conflicts also with the ideal of duty involved in these words of Jesus Christ.

We masters also, your professed advisers and guides during the years in which you prepare yourselves for men's work, are by the same words constrained to throw heart and soul into the business of making you ready. We are your governors, but we are first of all your servants. The school, we know, does not exist for the masters, but for the boys. It is our first concern to make you ready. We must ourselves continue to study and to learn, that our minds may keep fresh and full for your instruction ; and if we set an ill example in conduct and self-government, in eagerness, in laboriousness, in punctuality, in soberness of life, in contempt for money and comfort, we know ourselves to be hirelings and unfaithful servants. Some of the blame shall lie at our door if you are not ready to face life like men, when men you become.

When the preparative time ends, life will

change its look and colour not a little. At school every hour is filled with some direct occupation. Most men on the other hand are largely left to themselves. Their day's work at all events ends at some fixed time. They have some leisure to use or to squander. If in the time for making ready they have so learned the duty of labour that it has become a habit with them, they are sure to use their leisure reasonably. More projects will crowd in upon their brain than they can carry out, and their difficulty will be to select the most serviceable to their fellows. I should not give much for any man who at any moment in his life has not more things that he would like to do than time to overtake them. There is no real sense of responsibility for the use of life, the duty of service has not been learned, until the responsibility, the duty, has become attractive; until the longing for labour of some kind is turned into a sort of instinct.

It is this, let me repeat, which makes the many several lives spent together in this place so deeply interesting, so rife with good.

or so rife with ill. The unstable and moving outcome of the impulses and the thoughts, the words and the actions, of these sundry lives thrown together, clashing together, meeting, must act and react upon the character of each person so powerfully, that it becomes a matter of the most serious moment whether that outcome makes in the main for good or for evil. If this thought be not altogether forgotten, if it be at least in the minds of a few ever present and active, then the school will in some degree fulfil its purpose in forming for its sons a habit of life incompatible with any abased conception of duty and responsibility.

But if better than nothing, this is less than the ideal that Jesus held up to the Twelve, and less than the spirit of Christ renders possible for those who suffer him to dwell in them. If always clean and sweet and cleansing, the habit of labour and the pursuit of duty need cleanse and sweeten only the natural man. The character may remain selfish and unsympathetic, even when

it scorns the squandering of time and the misuse of God's other gifts. Such an attitude may not be Christian at all. It is not bred from the spirit of Christ, nor is a man born again thereby. Hence the importance of the more prominent spiritual influences for the common life led at school. The few minutes together in Abbey before lessons begin, in the schoolroom when they end, may mean little or much to the single soul—Christ alone can judge—but they do bring one and all together into the presence of God twice each day; and the few or the many who at these times seek the spirit of Christ understand more clearly day by day what Christ means when he says, that having done all that is commanded them they are unprofitable servants.

SERMON XXVI

THE HUNGER OF THE SOUL

The Lord satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.—PSALM cvii 9

SOMEBODY has said that “those who are not quite satisfied are the sole benefactors of the world”; and, bold though the doctrine be, none can prove it untrue. It is true of single men; it is true of bodies of men. It is true of the mind; it is just as true of the soul.

In a Greek writer an enemy of the Athenians is made to say that the hunger of the mind was just the difference which marked them off from other men; that when they had once conceived some purpose, they thought that they suffered loss if it were not made good; if they had any success they

esteemed it a mere instalment of the whole ; and if they failed they could not rest until they had fomented new hopes. In this portrait are seen the lineaments of a great race, of a rich nature—life, vigour, movement, interest, enthusiasm, belief, hope.

In the case of Athens the craving for something better and greater was in the main intellectual. The thin, unthrifty soil of Attica bred a race that so hungered and thirsted after truth and beauty, that in art and literature these achievements are still the wonder and the despair and the inspiration of the world. In the case of another people, almost as weak in numbers and bred on as sterile a soil, the dissatisfaction with past performance was displayed in things spiritual. The longing soul hungering after righteousness, thirsting for the waters of life, eagerly awaiting the coming of the day of the Lord, is the soul of Elijah, and Amos, and Hosea, and Isaiah, and the rest of the prophets. It is the soul of John the Baptist and the sons of Zebedee, of Simon Peter and Andrew.

“The two disciples followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, where dwellest thou?” They sought the day of the Lord, and it was come to them. Its dawn was at last visible. They had seen the Messiah. They had begun to discover that “the Lord satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

The text is a sort of beatitude pronounced upon the discontentment of a man with his past life and his present spiritual achievement. It can never be well with anyone if he imagines that progress comes fast enough; if he is content with what he is, with the measure of knowledge or fervour or courage or goodness which he has reached. To become content is to stop expanding and growing and doing good. It is worse. It is to begin to retrograde, to impede progress, to produce in other men, as in oneself, stagnation of spirit. How can anyone inspire others who sees no need for becoming better

himself? How can he inform other souls with enthusiasm if he keeps no spark alight wherewith to kindle them?

It may not be in me to excel greatly in anything else, but it is my own fault if I excel not in this hunger of the soul. I can at least long to become better, purer in heart, more generous in judging, less ready to envy and jealousy, more courageous in doing my duty, less bound by conventions, more in love with the right, more truthful in word and act and thought. I can prove my affection for home or for school by adding the results of this self-discontent or hunger of the soul to the common stock of good influences from which I have myself derived advantage. Earnestness is catching, and if earnestly I hunger after goodness, I make others hunger also. If on the other hand, instead of longing to be better than I am, I do as some have done lately, and crush conscience and openly glory in a lie, and having experience in evil tempt others therewith, I surely cannot do others any good, nor can I cherish any real affection

for my home or my school. To act in this way is a sign that the soul is not only content and lethargic, but is bent upon evil against itself and against others.

A spark may pass from soul to soul as instantaneous as the spark that leaps between the poles of an electric battery, and as potent to alter the nature of the elements through which it passes. The spiritual atmosphere of the school is charged with influences given off by ourselves, some begotten of the soul's hunger for goodness, some of the soul's lethargy, or worse, of the soul's hunger after evil. Let me try to describe what happens when there is hunger for goodness. The other picture I should rather not draw at all. It is the reverse in every point.

There is no means of estimating the good which any one soul may do by its hunger and thirst after goodness, but everyone knows when this hunger is common in the school. In a subtle, untraceable way there has arisen in place of sloth and torpor a sort of energy which finds its way into all, renovating and

strengthening will and soul and mind. I have seen this happen more than once, and have been filled with wonder and with reverence, seeing what had seemed to be common and ordinary intelligence assuming strength and clearness and comprehensiveness, and what once appeared to be unambitious and self-satisfied spirits taking the purity and depth of purpose which alone dignify character ; best of all, feeling the spirit of Christ sought and received and active.

This magnetic power of one over many, and of many over one, seems to arise no one knows how ; but it is certainly only the last stage of a long continuous process in which many single souls have been longing and hungering after goodness, and many wills have perseveringly been exerted to force weakness to give place to strength, lethargy to ardour, the love of ease to activity, and cowardice to courage.

Life in any form is worthy of admiration, but in none does it produce so great an impression of majesty as when it is revealed in

the souls of men. There is no means whereby the bodily life of one man may impart of its strength to the life of another. No man can give to another a share in his vigorous constitution or active frame. There is no emanation of influence from bodily vitality, however great; but it is otherwise with men's minds and souls. These give and take. They meet and interpenetrate. They touch and are one.

It is of concern, therefore, to the school what spirit most are of. If at any time there are many within it who are content to go on as they are; if at any time there are even a few within it who are condoned when they act as though evil were their good, it is not well with the common life, and the evil is certain to grow and to declare itself also ere long.

There are at least some here who already are possessed by this hunger for something better, this longing for something higher, this discontent with self, this faith, this spirit of Christ. To them the school will never know

all that it owes ; but be they many in number or be they few, it is they and they alone who produce the best part of any training that the rest receive here. They are the school. They are your schoolmasters and mine.

SERMON XXVII

THE SLAVE, THE HIRELING, AND THE SON

I am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.—LUKE xv 19.

THE household which the younger son is eager to forsake comprises three several orders under the one householder. There are the sons of the house, the hired servants, and the slaves. The men who make up each class think that they serve, and are thought to serve, the one householder. All would appear to labour in his house or in his fields. The elder son himself works with the rest ; for it is he who says : “ Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither have I transgressed at any time thy commandment.” The servants, whether of one kind or of another, sons and hirelings and slaves, all alike are entrusted

with the householder's treasures and gear ; they wait at his table or fatten beasts in his stalls. Any one of them all, slave or hireling or elder son, is free to go forth from the house at his pleasure, and travel, as did the younger son, into a far country.

The key to the interpretation of this parable is to be found, I conceive, in the description that is drawn of the far country. The far country is the world, openly and frankly sought. It is the house of another householder who is known by sundry names, varying with the nature of his lures or of his wages. He is Satan or the Devil when he is regarded as the adversary of God and of man ; he is Belial, as the denier of man's responsibilities to God ; he is the prince of this world, as tempting men by worldly power and secular glory ; he is the father of lies, as rejecting reality and truth ; he is Abaddon or Apollyon, as the destroyer of souls. Therefore, if such be the potentate whom the citizens of the far country are bound to obey, then the household remote from his authority

must be the opposite of his domain. It is the Church of God, composed of those who by profession at least desire to serve and to love God, and to keep aloof from the far country. This much all the three orders, sons and hirelings and slaves, allege that they do. They do not openly with audacity seek the far country. If they go thither at times, they steal away and steal back. They deceive the rest of the household, and perhaps even imagine that they deceive the householder himself.

The three orders in this great household are not at all times composed of the same men. Single souls pass continually from one class into another. He who is a hireling one day may be a slave the next, or a slave may become a hireling, or the elder son himself may degrade into a servant, working for hire or for a morsel of bread, as when he says to his father: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee. and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." If the elder son can thus assume the hireling

spirit, then neither slave nor hired servant can be precluded from joining the order of sons, if only he begin to serve from love. The householder is always saying to him: "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine;" and if only he will believe, he shall become son in room of hireling or of slave.

The more often I read these calm utterances of the Eternal Word, these simple histories of man's divers relations with his Maker, I read them with an awe always growing, with a fear that seizes and almost overwhelms, that if I may not go boldly out into the far country, yet in the household of God I am no son at all, but a hireling or a slave.

Some of you asked me last week why I had called it wrong to pray for anything other than spiritual gifts, for success, say, in any ordinary enterprise. Perhaps you see now, after studying this parable, as you might also see after studying certain other parables, that he who prays for material blessings of any kind is in danger of ranking as a hired servant

or a slave. All I have, in strength, in ability, in opportunity, is the gift of God, and must be accounted for. Why therefore pray for success? What I should pray for is the power in Christ so to love God that I use his gifts to the full in his service, and not for myself. If I pray for success, I pray as the pagans prayed or pray to their several gods; I pray as a hireling, and not as a son.

The other day when some here declared before the eyes of their natural and their spiritual kindred, of their comrades and their friends, that they sought the spirit of Christ, they and the congregation that witnessed their act represented the great household in the parable with its three orders of sons and hirelings and slaves. No eye of man could discern the difference by which each soul fell into one class or into another; nevertheless, for the time, each single soul present there did belong to one and only one of the three orders.

There were there those who might be called passive members of the household,

downright slaves, bound in the ties of convention, who for fashion's sake or appearance sake, have suffered the name of Christ Jesus to be invoked upon them, and perform without love, yet perhaps punctiliously, the outward forms of service, keeping, it may be, the robes and jewels of the household, providing the vessels and the wherewithal to load them, making merry in festivals, and in fasts fasting, because they are bidden so to do by ecclesiastical ordinances. "These things they ought to have done and not to leave the others undone." They belong to the order of slaves, men who serve only with the bodily presence in church, who are concerned with the manner of the ceremonies there used, and regard not the weightier matters of the law, mercy and brotherly love and the allegiance of the spirit. They understand not the "glorious liberty of the sons of God."

There were present also those whose service for the time is of a less ignoble kind, yet not spiritual service springing from love. These are the servants hired by sundry

qualities or opportunities derived from God, who use them, it may be, like free men in the moral service of God, but not for the love of God so much as for their own satisfaction, or even for their own advancement. Whole-hearted men, perhaps, living cleanly, using their bodies and their faculties and character for honourable ends, priding themselves in their assiduous performance of the duties and responsibilities of their several positions, and contented therein, wholly satisfied thereby. Such have their reward in full. The famished prodigal, when he had discovered the spiritual emptiness of the far country, for all its flaunting plenty in lusts fulfilled and desires made good and the pride of life gratified, conceiving that he had forfeited for ever his birthright as a son, was turned by disgust at the husks of his swinish life to desire the moral contentment enjoyed by these hired servants in his father's household. He was only saved therefrom by his self-humiliation and abasht contrition. No sooner did he see his father than he dared not pray for worldly success

prodigal though he was, any more than he dared claim spiritual restoration ; therefore, he belonged not to the hireling order, but to the order of sons. For the hired servant takes his wage as his due and is satisfied that he has earned it well. How could the prodigal acquire such contentment? He had nothing but faith and love, penitence and hope ; and his sins which were many were forgiven him.

Of others in the far country, save of this sojourner there, I shall say nothing, although it may well be that even in this congregation composed of souls that should not be wholly withdrawn from God, there are yet those who are citizens of that country, satisfied with their master, the prince of this world, filling their belly with the things he provides, nor ever touched with the sense of famine such as the younger son felt when he inhabited there. Some such I have known even here at times ; and these perhaps may lay it at my door in the judgment day that their contentment with the husks that the swine eat was

not dispelled during the years that they spent at Westminster. May Christ determine that they speak falsely; or grant them forgiveness, if I am justly accused. I shall not be able to gainsay them.

THE END

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